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## JCPOA talks continue as Raisi secures landslide victory

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### Iranian hospitality for refugees impressive despite challenges

**BY FARANAK BAKHTIARI**  
Over the past four decades, Iranian people have shown impressive hospitality and generosity to refugees, as the country is the 8th largest hosting nation for displaced people.

Some 82 million people are forcibly displaced from their homes, 26 million in a country that is not their own, with 86 percent of refugees being hosted in developing countries.

"Together we heal, learn and shine" is the theme of World Refugee Day 2021, which aims at people belonging to all faiths, all over the world, working together to welcome stateless persons, displaced people, refugees, and others who have been forced to flee their homes.

During the past years, Iran more and more included refugees, undocumented or passport-holders in the national system, hosting close to one million refugees - most of whom are Afghans.

Based on the latest statistics, over 3 million Afghans are living in Iran - some 780,000 Afghan refugees, over 2 million undocumented Afghans, and another 600,000 Afghan passport-holders with Iranian visas.

For more than 40 years, the Government and people of Iran have shown incredible hospitality and generosity to Afghans, which is seen in very few refugee-hosting countries around the world.

Over the past year, the COVID-19 pandemic has affected people's lives across the globe, causing millions of deaths, economic recession, restrictions on gatherings, and other severe limitations; and the refugees were no exception bearing the consequences.

Iran, which has been dealing with the virus, was also impacted by the U.S. sanctions. In fact, it was a major challenge to receiving international aid on time and was also a barrier to medicine and medical equipment import. So that, part of the financial problems the refugees are bearing is related to unilateral sanctions.

With the decreasing opportunities in Iran and with the situation still uncertain in Afghanistan, refugees are finding it harder to cope.

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### Alamut Castle: a visit to once impenetrable fortress of 'Assassins'

TEHRAN – Perched on top of a steep hill, Alamut Castle was once sheltering the followers of Hasan-e Sabbah (1070–1124), the spiritual leader of a heretical Ismaili sect that spawned the word 'Assassins'.

Alamut Castle is situated on the northeastern side of Gazor Khan Village in the environs of Alamut, Qazvin province. While approaching the village, visitors should pass for nearly half along a narrow road surrounded by cherry and pomegranate orchards, until a mass of gray-brown rock looms from distance with fortifications perched atop a summit.

The access path to the fortress starts about 700m beyond the village square and requires a steep 25-minute climb via a stairway.

Meaning "eagle's nest", Alamut is a geographic region in the western edge of the Alborz Mountain range, between the dry and barren plain of Qazvin in the south and the

densely forested slopes of the Mazandaran province in the north.

Sabbah's rule over Alamut is shrouded in mystery and enigma; partly because most Ismaili records of the era were destroyed by the Mongols while the writings of their detractors survived.

In the early 1930s, British-Italian explorer and travel writer Freya Stark described her exploration of the place in her book "The Valleys of the Assassins". In her celebrated 1934 travelogue, she recounts her hike up to Nevisar with mules that "seemed to be standing on their hind legs."

These days Alamut is something of a great day out. Visitors can leave Tehran first thing in the morning for Qazvin, weave across the Alamut's first ramparts a few hours later, and, heading up-valley, reach Gazorkhan in time for a late lunch.

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### U.S. redeploying military hardware in West Asia

The Pentagon says it is cutting the number of troops and anti-missile systems that had been deployed to West Asia. A spokesperson has confirmed a report by the Wall Street Journal, the first media outlet that broke the story, that eight Patriot battery units are being withdrawn from the region.

Pentagon Spokesperson, Jessica McNulty, says that some of the units are being deployed to other countries and others will be returning to the United States for maintenance. McNulty declined to comment on which countries or regions the redeployed units are being relocated to.

According to the Wall Street Journal report, citing sources from within the Biden administration, Patriot anti-missile batteries are being removed from Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Kuwait and Iraq.

The report says the anti-missile system THAAD (Terminal High Altitude Area Defense) is

also being withdrawn from Saudi Arabia. Fighter jet squadrons are reportedly being reduced as well. The report cites U.S. administration officials as saying that American troops who handle each battery will either be redeploying elsewhere or returning home. One patriot battery requires hundreds of troops and military contractors to operate and support the system.

According to U.S. officials, most of the military hardware will be removed from Saudi Arabia, where Washington has reportedly been trying to convince Riyadh to assume extra responsibility toward its own defense. The reductions are said to have started earlier this month following a phone call between U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, and Saudi Crown Prince, Mohammed Bin Salman on June 2. The new measures do not mean Washington will be significantly reducing its military presence in West Asia.

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### Tactical evolution of Dragan Skocic's team

TEHRAN - After plenty of intriguing storylines, Iran National Football Team showed their true grit by edging a resilient Iraqi side 1-0, where the Iranian team finished as Group C winners in the Asian qualifiers for 2022 FIFA World Cup.

The victory was a remarkable achievement for Dragan Skocic's side, who won all four matches against Hong Kong, Bahrain, Cambodia and Iraq.

Convincingly in Manama, throughout the tournament, Iran displayed Tactical Flexibility

by adopting a basic 1-4-2-3-1 formation with impressive Sardar Azmoun as an out-and-out striker supported by gifted Mehdi Taremi in supporting position. Some of their place-changing and combination play were breathtaking. In the match against Iraq, Azmoun converted Ehsan Haji Safi's pinpointed cross to give 1-0 lead in the 39th minute.

The goal was resulted of eight consecutive passes and positional play. Skillful Ali Gholizadeh was instrumental to break Iraq's defensive midblock, delivering a line-breaking diagonal pass behind opponent back-four defending line.

Iraqi left-footed players namely, Humam Tariq, Ali Adnan and Safa Hadi were neutralized by Iran discipline and compact defending structure.

Since Carlos Queiroz's departure in 2019 and Marc Wilmots' short and disappointing spell in Team Melli,

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### S. Arabia has lost its cards in Yemen: analyst

**BY REZA MOSHFEGH**

TEHRAN – A Yamani writer says that Saudi Arabia looks for a solution to get out of Yemen's swamp as it has lost its cards in the regions and Yemen.

"Saudi Arabia is looking for a way to exit from this war, which entered this year its seventh," Talib al-Hassani tells the Tehran Times.

"Saudis have lost more cards facing more military and economic pressures, and this means that time is not going in their favor, but rather in the interest of Yemen," al-Hassani adds.

Following is the text of the interview:

**How do you see Saudi Arabia's position on Yemen after the Yemenis showed that they are able to respond to the Saudi aggression? Is Saudi Arabia in a position of strength?**

Saudi Arabia is looking for a way to exit from this war, which entered this year its seventh.

Meanwhile, Saudis have lost more cards facing more military and economic pressures, and this means that time is not going in their favor, but rather in the interest of Yemen.

The decision to end this catastrophe will not be in hands of Saudis, as the war decision was. The United States of America is a major partner in decision-making, and therefore today they are partners in the search for safe exit from Yemen.

These partners in war after their failure have no card on the negotiating table, unless embargo, economic sanctions and further restrictions.

All the Saudi or American initiatives that have been put forward since Biden came to power are based on negotiating with Sana'a over two options:

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## Mazandaran exports \$2m of handicrafts in year

TEHRAN – Handicrafts products worth over two million dollars were exported from the northern Mazandaran province during the previous Iranian calendar year 1399 (March 20, 2020 – March 21, 2021), the provincial tourism chief has said.

However, the main obstacle to exporting handicrafts has been marketing and the absence of a steady market, which, despite the remarkable output of this industry, is not very profitable, CHTN quoted Seifollah Farzaneh as saying on Saturday.

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## Leader felicitates nation over the elections

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** — In a message issued on Saturday noon, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei praised the “epic” participation of the people in the June 18 presidential and council elections.

The Leader advised winners of presidential and council elections to appreciate “the loyal” and “faithful people”.

The message of the Leader, posted on the khamenei.ir, reads as follows:

“In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful  
To the great, honorable nation of Iran,  
Your enthusiastic, epic turnout for the June 18th elections has added yet another shining page to your honors. In the midst of the factors that could have caused a decline in the people’s participation in the elections, the pleasing scene of your participation was a clear sign of your firm willpower, hearts filled with hope and watchful eyes.

The great winner of yesterday’s elections is the Iranian nation, who have again stood up to the propaganda of the enemy’s mercenary media and the urgings of the simple-minded and the ill-wishers. They have displayed their presence in the heart of the country’s political arena.

Neither the complaints about the adverse living conditions of the weak classes, nor the anguish from the threat of Covid-19, nor the opposition’s attempts to dishearten the people—which started months ago, nor the disruptions in the early hours on election day were able to overcome the Iranian nation’s determination or create problems for the important Presidential elections or for the Islamic City and Village Council elections.

I prostrate myself in gratefulness (to God) and express my infinite gratitude to God, the All-Knowing and Almighty, for the help and success He bestowed upon the Iranian nation and for His Mercy to Iran and the Islamic Republic. I congratulate the Iranian nation and I also congratulate the honorable newly elected officials who will be taking on the responsibility of Presidency and membership in the Islamic City and Village Councils across the country. I remind them to be grateful to this loyal nation and be totally committed to the duties specified for them by the law. Appreciate the opportunity to serve the country and the nation and always have a divine motivation.

I find it necessary to express my gratitude to the honorable Guardian Council, the Ministry of the Interior, the security and health organizations, the hardworking national media, the honorable candidates and all those who have helped in this great test in any way.”

## Officials rush to congratulate Raeisi

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** — President-elect Seyyed Ebrahim Raeisi had a very busy day on Saturday as he was showered with congratulatory messages from various Iranian politicians as well as political parties and figures.



Mohsen Rezaei, Abdolnasser Hemmati, and Amir Hossein Qazizadeh Hashemi who were competing with Raeisi in the Friday presidential elections were among the first to congratulate the president-elect who won with a landslide victory.

From a total of 28,933,004 ballots counted, Raeisi succeeded to win 17,926,345 votes, the Interior Ministry election headquarters said. The rate of participation was announced to be 48.8 percent. Rezaei, Hemmati, and Qazizadeh also won 3,412,712 votes, 2,427,201 votes, and 999,718 votes, respectively.

Rezaei congratulated Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei for people’s participation in the elections.

Also, in part of his congratulatory message Hemmati hoped that Raeisi would bring prosperity and better livelihood for the “great Iranian nation”.

In his message, Qazizadeh also congratulated Raeisi. “While supporting the votes of the people, I congratulate Hazrat Ayatollah Seyyed Ebrahim Raeisi as the people’s president-elect,” Qazizadeh stated.

Qazizadeh also wished success for Raeisi for being honored to serve the “great Iranian nation”.

He also congratulated the Leader for people’s “epic” participation in the polls.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Qazizadeh said Ayatollah Khamenei “made the path clear to all through his guiding remarks on the eve of the elections.”

In televised remarks, sitting President Hassan Rouhani also congratulated the president-elect. Rouhani and Parliament speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf also met separately with the president-elect.

Also on Saturday morning, Qalibaf praised the people’s massive participation in the elections despite complaints about incompetency in managerial system.

In a post on his Twitter account, Qalibaf said he congratulates the holding of “national election celebrations as well as epic participation” of the people to the Leader and the “noble people of Iran”.

Expediency Council chairman Ayatollah Sadegh Amoli Larijani also congratulated the president-elect. Ali Larijani, senior advisor to the Leader, also congratulated Raeisi.

Army Commander Abdolrahim Mousavi also issued a message congratulating “the creation of the glorious epic of the great nation of Islamic Iran and the election of Raeisi as the 8th president of the Islamic Republic of Iran.”

Seyyed Hassan Khomeini also congratulated Raeisi over his landslide victory.

“Congratulations to you on gaining the trust of a large part of the people and winning the title of president of the Islamic Republic of Iran,” Hassan Khomeini said in his message.

# Who is Iran’s elected president?

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Following the declaration of Seyyed Ebrahim Raeisi as the winner of the 13h presidential elections, the Tehran Times decided to take a brief look at his profile.

Seyed Ebrahim Raeisi, aged 61, was born in Noghan district of Mashhad. He holds a PhD in jurisprudence and fundamentals in Islamic law from Shahid Mottahari University as well as the grade 4 of jurisprudence from Qom Seminary (the higher the grade the better).

During his life, he has had the following positions:

- \* Tehran prosecutor
- \* Head of the General Inspection Office
- \* Attorney general
- \* Chairman of the Astan Quds Razavi organization,
- \* Member of the Assembly of Experts (serving in the assembly’s presiding board for two terms)



\* Member of the Center to Combat Economic Fraud

\* Chairman of the Monitoring Council on the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting

\* Judiciary chief

His political position on the JCPOA is as the Islamic Republic system highlights, meaning that the U.S. has to lift all sanctions,

## Putin congratulates Iran’s president-elect Raeisi

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Russian President Vladimir Putin sent a message on Saturday congratulating the election of Ebrahim Raeisi as the president of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

“Dear Mr. Seyyed Ebrahim Raeisi, the president-elect of the Islamic Republic of Iran, accept my sincere congratulations on the election of Your Excellency as the president of the Islamic Republic of Iran,” Putin said in his message.

In part of his message, Putin also said the relationship between “our countries are traditionally gifted with friendship and good neighborliness.”

The Russian leader expressed hope that during the tenure of Raeisi the relations between the two countries would keep progressing toward mutual constructive cooperation in different areas at bilateral and international levels.

Such an approach will “fully meet the interests of the Russian and Iranian nations” and help strengthen regional security and stability, Putin added.

At the end, Putin wished success and health for the Iranian president-elect.

A Twitter linked to the Hezbollah secretary general also posted photos of President-elect Raeisi’ meetings with Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Seyyed Hassan Nasrallah and Ayatollah Sheikh Isa Qassem, leader of the Bahraini Shias.

Leaders of several other neighboring countries, party leaders offer congratulations to the president-elect.

**Armenian president sends congratulatory letter to Iran’s president-elect**

Armenian President Armen Sarkissian sent a congratulatory letter to Raisi on being elected as new president of Iran, the Armenian President’s Office told Armenpress.

The letter reads:  
“I believe that under your leadership Iran will continue the development and prosperity path.

Armenia values the consistent strengthening and deepening of existing friendly relations and constructive dialogue with Iran, which is one of the key conditions for ensuring our countries’ progress and regional stability. The desire of our friendly nations to recognize each other and cooperate comes from centuries, and today broad opportunities exist for this.”

I hope the Armenian-Iranian warm friendly relations will continue developing and expanding in all areas with joint efforts, registering positive dynamics for a qualitatively new level of cooperation between our peoples”.

President Sarkissian wished Ebrahim Raisi good health and working achievements, and to the brotherly people of Iran – peace and welfare.

**Iraqi president wishes success for Iranian president-elect**

Iraqi President Barham Salih also sent a congratulatory message to the Iranian president-elect and wished him success.

Salih also insisted on consolidating ties with Iran in view of historical and cultural ties between the two countries.

The Iraqi president also pointed to the recent visit by Raeisi to Iraq, saying Iran played an important role in Iraq’s war against terrorism.

Elsewhere in his remarks, he insisted the region essentially needs wisdom, wise figures and language of dialogue to strengthen security and stability.

**Pakistan PM hopeful for cooperation with Raeisi for regional security**

Pakistan’s Prime Minister Imran Khan also sent a message congratulating the election of Raeisi as president in Iran.

“Congratulations to dear brother Ebrahim Raeisi for his landslide victory in the 13th presidential election in the Islamic Republic of Iran,” Khan tweeted.

Prime Minister Khan added he is “hopeful” for cooperation with the Iranian president-elect and “further consolidation of friendly ties, regional security and progress.”

**Lebanon’s Berri says Iran will remain strong and powerful in face of sanctions**

Lebanese Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri also congratulated Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei over the successful presidential election in Iran.

In his message, the veteran Lebanese politician said, “Like always Iran will remain great and powerful in resisting sanctions.”

**Syrian president: I will sincerely congratulate your victory**

“I am very glad that in my name and in name of the people of the Republic of Syria to congratulate you from bottom of (my) heart the Iranian nation’s confidence on you and your victory in the election,” Syrian President Bashar al-Assad said in his message to Raeisi.

He also wished success for the Iranian president-elect to keep continuing the path of the progress of Iran and defeat all plots and neutralize pressures which are aimed to undermine the will of the Iranian nation.

“I will use this opportunity to express my desire for cooperation with you for strengthening the process of mutual relationship by capitalizing on decades of historical friendship, mutual understanding and joint interests,” the Syrian leader remarked.

**Hamas congratulates Ayatollah Khamenei over the elections**

The Palestinian resistance movement Hamas also issued a statement on expressing happiness over the successful pres-

idential polls in Iran and the election of Raeisi as president.

Hamas also said it sincerely congratulates Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Leader of the Islamic Revolution, over the elections.

The resistance movement also said it wishes success for Raeisi in the presidential post, realization of the Iranians’ demands for progress and welfare and also continuation of the “valuable” position of Iran in backing the Palestinian nation’s right for a just solution to their long-decades conflict with Israel.

Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev also sent a congratulatory message to Raisi on the occasion of his election as president of Iran, the Azerbaijan Trend News reported.

**UAE congratulates Raeisi on election victory**

Leaders of the UAE also congratulated Raeisi, the UAE state news WAM reported. UAE President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan sent a message of congratulations to Raisi on winning Iran’s presidential election. In addition to Sheikh Khalifa, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President, Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai, and Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces, have also dispatched similar messages of congratulations to Ayatollah Raisi.

**Al-Nujaba chief: Iranians once again show their loyalty to the system**

Iraq’s Harakat al-Nujaba Secretary General Akram al-Kaabi also felicitated Raeisi for his election as the Iranian president. Al-Kaabi also congratulated the Leader of the Islamic Revolution and the Iranian people on the election.

In part of his statement, he said, “The Iranian nation once again proved their loyalty to the government and the Leader of the revolution through their fervent participation in the election at home and abroad and turned challenges into an epic.”

The Harakat al-Nujaba secretary general also expressed hope that ties between Iran and Iraq would expand in all areas in view of religious and cultural affinities coupled with geographical proximity.

**Hakim felicitates Iran on presidential election**

Ammar al-Hakim, the leader of Iraq’s National Wisdom Movement, also sent message congratulating the Leader of the Islamic Revolution and the Iranian nation and government over the presidential election.

“We congratulate the experience of successful democracy and implementation of 13th presidential election to the Leader, government and the nation of the Islamic Republic of Iran,” Hakim stated.

He also expressed hope that the election of Raeisi will mark a new political beginning for resolving regional and extra-regional problems.

## Zarif says all must back President-elect Raeisi, predicts JCPOA would be revived in Rouhani admin.

“I am ready to send an ambassador to Saudi Arabia tomorrow”

**POLITICAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif says every Iranian must support President-elect Ebrahim Raeisi and all administrative affairs must be in accordance with his decisions.

Speaking on the sidelines of Antalya Diplomacy Forum on Saturday, Zarif also described Raeisi as “a reasonable man” who can govern the country.

When asked about the recent arguments in the presidential debates, Zarif considered these arguments as a sign of liveliness in political atmosphere of Iran, saying, “We are way ahead of most countries in the region in terms of having a lively political debate.” Zarif also predicted that the JCPOA – the official name for the 2015 nuclear deal – would most likely be revived during the remaining term of Hassan Rouhani’s administration.

On the ongoing nuclear deal talks in Vienna, Zarif also said, “I have read the revised draft. It is getting purer and purer, brackets are to be removed.” The foreign minister said Iran and the United States are somehow reaching a common understanding on the deal but they have not still reached the “desired destination”.

“U.S. cannot achieve what they couldn’t accomplish in economic war against Iran on negotiations table. We are getting closer to a mutual understanding, but not reached desired destination,” Zarif remarked.

He also said the whole world now knows that Iran cannot return to the JCPOA without the approval of the parliament.



the approval of the parliament.

“We need to have approval from parliament before we resume implementation of JCPOA.”

On the possibility of returning to the deal, he simply said, “If there is a will, there is a way.”

**Zarif says does not trust Biden**

Zarif went on to criticize the European Union for blindly following the path of the United States in imposing sanctions on Iran, saying, “Sanctions are not assets. Sanctions are a liability. Sanctions are illegal. Sanctions are unlawful. Europeans have been forced into succumbing to U.S. sanctions, but it doesn’t mean that they approve it.” He then said he does not trust Joe Biden, or anyone, because “diplomacy does not mean you put your trust in somebody else, diplomacy is not love affair!”

On possibility of enriching uranium beyond 63%, Zarif simply said, “We may, or we may not, that is a decision we make without any limitation,” indirectly suggesting that the move highly depends on the U.S. decision

to return to its JCPOA obligations or not.

When asked Zarif about the Tehran-Riyadh talks, he said that Iran has had negotiations with the Saudis in Baghdad, but not in Russia.

“We have had three rounds of talks with Saudi Arabia in Baghdad, our representation was inclusive. We had representatives from Supreme National Security Council, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Intelligence, and the military.”

He added that the main issue with Saudi Arabia is that they want to purchase security from outside, and they should know that “nobody can buy security from outside.”

He then went on to elaborate about Iran’s position in the region, saying, “Our neighborhood doctrine is that we are bound to live together forever. We will remain in the neighborhood; others come and go.”

“I am ready to send an ambassador to Saudi Arabia tomorrow. It depends on them. There is no reason that we should not be able to resolve our conflicts,” the minister remarked.

On the allegations that Iran is arming the Yemeni Houthis, Zarif laughed and said it is not Iran that has destroyed Yemen. He said, “Nobody has been able to conquer Yemen. They don’t need anybody’s arms to defend themselves. Those bombing Yemeni schools, hospitals, markets, those are destroying Yemen, not Iran.”

He then pointed to another issue of conflict between Iran and Saudi Arabia, saying that they have to understand they cannot impose

and after extensive verification, Iran will return to its JCPOA obligations. He calls the JCPOA a “blank cheque” that should have been cashed by the government.

Regarding his political position on interaction with neighbors and the West, he believes that Iran should interact with all countries. He says his foreign policy will be in accordance with the Leader’s guidelines, and that Iran’s national pride and dignity should be respected.

Raeisi thinks the situation can improve if the government implements the foreign policy announced by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution. “The enemy wants to destroy our pride and national dignity,” he says.

Fee free to follow his remarks on social media platforms:

- \* Instagram: raisi\_org
- \* Telegram: raisi\_org
- \* Twitter: raisi\_org (suspended)
- \* Website: raisi.ir



# JCPOA talks continue as Raisi secures landslide victory

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** – In what appeared to be a diplomatic miscalculation, the UN nuclear watchdog's chief has said that an agreement with Iran should be reached after the outcome of Iran's presidential election is announced.

In remarks to Italian newspaper Repubblica, Rafael Grossi, director-general of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), called on the diplomats involved in the Vienna nuclear talks to wait until a new government in Iran is formed. The Vienna talks are mainly seeking to revive a 2015 nuclear deal formally called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). "Everyone knows that at this point, it is necessary to wait for the formation of a new government in Iran," Grossi said in response to a question on the point to which the Vienna talks reached.

Grossi also pointed to the complications of the Vienna talks and said the revival of the JCPOA requires the political will of all parties. The director-general's remarks raised eyebrows in Tehran as the IAEA chief is not in a position to make political remarks regarding the Vienna talks. Grossi's predecessor, Yukiya Amano, always emphasized that the IAEA is not a member of the JCPOA and has only the task of verifying the fulfillment of Iran's nuclear obligations.

However, Grossi has made bizarre statements in favor of the United States, saying that the Vienna talks that have been going on in recent weeks have faced very complex and technical issues. He claimed that reaching an agreement on the revival of the JCPOA required the political will of all parties.

Grossi's remarks also ran counter to the Islamic Republic of Iran's stated position that what is happening in Vienna has nothing to do with Iran's elections and internal developments.

The first official response to Grossi came from Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araqchi, who is leading the Iranian negotiating team in Vienna. Araqchi said Grossi has no clue about the political atmosphere in Iran.

"Mr. Grossi probably has no knowledge of political dynamism in Iran. Nuclear negotiations are a major foreign policy issue, and decisions are made at the highest levels of the system," the Iranian diplomat said in an interview with Al Jazeera. "Reaching an agreement depends on meeting the key demands and resolving the fundamental concerns of the Islamic Republic, and whenever we reach such a point, an agreement will be reached, whether in this government or in the next government. Of course, I must say that we are now closer to an agreement than ever before, and I personally very much hope that an agreement will be reached in this government."

He added, "Of course, the issues that are



discussed at the negotiating tables should be addressed at the same desk, not in the media. However, I can generally say that the main problem with the negotiations is the approach of the Americans, who are unable to give up their excessive addiction to sanctions and still cannot understand that sanctions are a failed solution. As I said in one of my recent tweets, Trump is gone, but his illegal and criminal sanctions are still in place. As a matter of fact, the new U.S. administration has not yet stopped Trump's policy of maximum pressure and thinks that what Trump could not achieve with maximum threats and sanctions, they can achieve at the negotiating table. The negotiations that are currently underway are facing very complex and delicate technical issues, but what is needed to reach an agreement is the political will of all parties."

Araqchi also pointed to the probable election of Ayatollah Ebrahim Raisi, underlining that Raisi appeared realistic and pragmatic on foreign policy issues.

There were some speculations that the Vienna talks could stop if Raisi won the presidential election. Raisi himself sought to allay these fears during the presidential debates, voicing support for the JCPOA and engagement with the international community.

Responding to a question on the election of Raisi, Araqchi noted, "Mr. Raisi's positions in the field of foreign policy, as expressed during the election campaign, reflect a realistic and interactive policy based on cooperation with the international community and constructive economic interaction. His positions on the JCPOA and the ongoing negotiations also reflect the same realism and pragmatism in foreign policy. I am sure that if he is elected, there will be no disruption in the negotiation process."

The top Iranian nuclear negotiator underlined, "At the same time, I must say that it is the calculation of national interests that determines the success or

failure of the negotiations. We are looking for the interests of the Iranian people and I am sure that whoever is elected president will pursue the same goal. In these negotiations, we count the interests of the country and the people, not the number of votes of the candidates. The policies set by the country's top authorities will determine the instructions of the Iranian negotiating team, and we will only move in that direction."

Grossi's remarks appeared to have required a meeting between Iran and the IAEA. Araqchi met with the IAEA chief on Friday while millions of Iranians flocked to polling stations to cast their votes. During the meeting, Araqchi and Grossi discussed the JCPOA negotiations and the role of the UN nuclear watchdog, according to Kazem Gharibabadi, Iran's envoy to the IAEA.

"Deputy Minister Araqchi and @rafaelgrossi discussed today the latest developments around the JCPOA negotiations and possible assistance of the @iaeaorg in this process. They also reviewed mutual interactions and cooperation between Iran and the IAEA," Gharibabadi said on Twitter.

While Araqchi had said Iran moves forward with the Vienna talks in accordance with its interests, Grossi implied that the talks may be delayed until after the Iranian election. This is while Grossi is not a party to the talks and Iran has said that the talks should not be subject to internal considerations.

Before heading to Vienna for another round of talks, Araqchi had stressed that Iran is looking for a good agreement and it will neither be in a rush nor will it waste time to reach such an agreement.

"We are looking for a good agreement for the Islamic Republic of Iran and we are not in a hurry or wasting time on this path. The sooner we get there, the better, of course. It is important that in this agreement the principles that Iran wants are observed and the indicators that we want to reach are included," he said.

Besides, the main obstacle to reaching an agreement has not been the Iranian election. Instead, it was the U.S.'s refusal to make clear commitments that it will not back down on its word again, according to Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif.

Zarif also noted that the U.S. tries to exact more concessions from Iran at the negotiating table. He underlined that the U.S. cannot achieve at the negotiating table what it failed to through economic warfare. "I saw the latest edited text of the agreement. The text has become purer and purer. Parentheses are being removed. The main obstacle that remains is the issue of understanding these cases. The United States must come to terms with the fact that it was the parties who deliberately left the agreement, but their goal was not achieved. Now that they want to return to the agreement, they cannot achieve through the negotiating table a goal that was not achieved through economic warfare," Zarif said at the Antalya Diplomacy Forum in Turkey.

The Iranian foreign minister also pointed out that the main obstacle in Vienna is how to verify U.S. adherence to the 2015 Iran nuclear deal.

"The question that remains is how we can verify the fulfillment of U.S. commitments. The party that needs to reassure us is the United States, and that is an obstacle to the negotiations, and we are working on that right now," he continued.

Zarif added, "The Biden administration has come to realize that the Trump administration's policies have failed, but it is still trying to use it as leverage, and that is why there is a perceptual problem. America must know that it is completely isolated. I do not trust Biden. In diplomacy, no one trusts others. No one trusts another in diplomacy. In diplomacy, you have to verify. You need to build trust and be predictable."

Zarif pointed to Iran's ability to reverse the remedial measures it taken in response to the U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA in May 2018.

"If we go back to JCPOA, we must live up to our commitment to 3.67% enrichment, and if that does not happen soon, we have no restrictions on enrichment. Even now we can increase enrichment but we do not need it," Zarif stated.

Iran has recently started 60% uranium enrichment at its Natanz nuclear enrichment plant as part of a calibrated policy designed to gradually reduce the country's compliance with the 2015 nuclear deal in response to the U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA nearly three years ago. The decision to increase the level of uranium enrichment was part of a broader strategy to reactivate Iran's nuclear program, which has been under severe restrictions since the signing of the JCPOA in 2015.

## SPORTS

### Tactical evolution of Dragan Skocic's team

→1 intelligent and highly motivated Skocic was selected in 2020 as the new Iran national team head coach. His biggest achievement was team's cohesion, clearly defined positional play and a game model based on five moments of the game. He has established a clear line of communication with players.

In The last quarter of the match against Iraq, Iran totally out-classed and outplayed Iraqi side, according to Metrica, Iranian technical and statistical reference of football. Iran dominated the game with 55% of possession and 497 passes.

In conclusion, with Iranian players playing in English league and UEFA Champions League, a rational strategic plan for our Team must be implemented in the next 10-year time, with aiming to reach the level of recognition of our style of play and Effective game model, and how we behave domestically and internationally in and off the field.

Morteza Mohases  
FIFA, AFC Panel of Coaching Instructors

### Iran federation dismisses link with Queiroz, Ivankovic

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** – Iran Football Federation spokesman Mahmoudreza Rezaei dismissed rumors that the federation is going to find a new head coach for the National Team.

Dragan Skocic's contract expired with Iran after the end of the 2022 World Cup qualification Round 2, where Iran won their four matches out of four under tutelage of Dragan Skocic.

The local media reports suggest that the Iranian federation has negotiated with ex-Iran coaches Branko Ivankovic and Carlos Queiroz.

"We earned 12 points in a difficult situation and it's time to enjoy for what we achieved. While respecting the Iranian media who helped us a lot during the qualification, the federation has not negotiated with any coach so far. The federation's Board of Directors will make the best decision at the right time and we inform the Iranian football fans straight away," he said.

The draw for Round 3 of World Cup qualifying will be conducted on July 1, with the 'Persian Leopards' are in Pot 1 along with Japan.



### 'I want to fix it': Socceroos coach Arnold says

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — It's the stain on his international career that Graham Arnold is desperate to erase - his last match for the Socceroos, on a night that left a deep scar on the psyche of Australian soccer.

It was November 29, 1997 at the MCG. Australia were 2-0 up against Iran and seemingly poised to end the nation's long exile from the World Cup finals.

Then serial pest Peter Hore - or "that lunatic", as Arnold remembers him - ran onto the field, threw himself onto the Iranian goal netting and caused a lengthy stoppage early in the second half, after Australia's second goal.

"It's amazing how many people still talk about it," Arnold said. "I remember all the players on the pitch at the time, they came over and it was really a breakdown in the game. Mentally, we switched off. Instead of driving the 2-0 forward we switched off and they got back straight in the game to 2-2 [Australia lost 3-3 on aggregate due to away goals].

"It was devastating. Seeing Terry Venables after the game, the way he was - it was the most unjust result he said he's ever seen in his life. It was a sad way to end my international career."

Now it gets harder. In less than two weeks, the Socceroos will find out which five other teams they'll be drawn with in the crucial next round, where a top-two finish in their group will clinch a spot at the World Cup finals.

One of the possibilities is Iran. Incredibly, Australia has not faced them once at senior level since that infamous night in 1997, with fate still keeping them apart even after the country's move from Oceania to the Asian confederation in 2006.

But Arnold doesn't want to wait any longer. "Bring Iran on," he said.

"It's a memory that is always there and it's one I want to fix. It was the last time I kicked a ball for the national team. I retired straight after that.

"We get Iran and wherever we play, it doesn't bother me. It doesn't matter who we play, where we play, we go out on the pitch expecting to win every game, and we play our way. That's with a lot of energy and our principles remain the same."

### Persepolis, Tractor to lock horns for Super Cup title

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** – Persepolis football team will host Tractor in Tehran's Azadi Stadium on Sunday with the aim of winning Hazfi Cup for the fourth time in a row.

Popular football team Persepolis have already won the trophy three times out of five editions.

Iran league champions Persepolis will play Tractor as Hazfi Cup winners.

It could be an exciting curtain-raiser for resumption of the league after a month. The Iran Professional League was halted for about one month due to the 2022 World Cup qualifiers.

"We respect Tractor since they are a strong team. The Sunday's match is a match between two champions and it shows that how important the match is," Persepolis coach Hamid Mottahari said in the pre-match news conference.

"Unfortunately, our midfielders Vahid Amiri and Kamal Kamyabinia are absent in the match due to injury but we are ready to win the title. We miss our fans and want to present them the title," he added.

The Iranian Super Cup is an Iranian association football trophy awarded to the winner of a match between the Persian Gulf Pro League's season champion and the winner of the Hazfi Cup. It is similar to numerous other Super Cup tournaments held in other countries.

## Iran deputy FM delivers speech at ICAO meeting

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs Mohsen Baharvand expounded on Tehran's viewpoints and activities regarding the 2020 Ukrainian plane crash at a meeting of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), according to a statement issued by the Iranian Foreign Ministry.

Baharvand made his comments in a detailed speech at the 223rd Session of the ICAO Council.

In his speech, Baharvand once again expressed regret over the tragic event and expressed condolences to the families of victims while elaborating on the legal, judicial and technical dimensions of the accident.

He reiterated that the Iranian government will pay damages to the families of those who lost their lives in the plane crash.

The diplomat highlighted Iran's recommendations mentioned in the final report on the air accident and said he was pleased to see ICAO had paid attention to them and drawn up working plans to implement those recommendations.

He welcomed any initiative or program to boost the safety of international aviation.

In response to politically-tainted and unprofessional comments by the Canadian transport minister in the session, Baharvand warned against any moves to politicize the issue.

The Iranian diplomat said such moves or any other



pretext or justification will not only not help enhance the safety of aviation, but will result in deviation from the technical objectives of ICAO and safe air transport.

The chairman of the ICAO Council and delegations present at the session, for their part, expressed their gratitude to the Iranian team and underlined that the air crash issue was a technical and non-political one.

In early June, Baharvand participated in the third round of Iran-Ukraine talks in Kyiv over the plane crash.

After the talks, he told Iran Press that a detailed legal discussion had taken place, and the Iranian court had jurisdiction to hear the case of the Ukrainian plane crash

threatening them.

On Friday, millions of Iranians went to the polls inside the country and abroad to elect a successor to President Hassan Rouhani, who has served two four-year terms.

Some reports said counterrevolutionary elements, who had gathered outside Iranian diplomatic missions in the UK, Australia and New Zealand, attacked the people who had turned out for the vote.

In post on its Twitter account late

on Friday, the Iranian Judiciary's High Council for Human Rights censured the Commonwealth member states such as the UK, Australia and New Zealand for failing to provide security for the Iranians voting in the presidential election at the embassies of their host countries.

Canada's government also did not allow the setting up of polling stations in the country in order for Iranian expats to participate in the election, in breach of international norms.

## Iran summons British ambassador over 'riotous, terrorist' acts against citizens voting in presidential election

→1 The spokesperson said the Foreign Ministry official has reminded the UK ambassador that "democracy will be realized at the ballot boxes and not in the moves of a few number of rioters on the streets."

The British diplomat, for his part, said that he would convey the Iranian government's protest to officials of his country.

Iran embassy to seriously pursue attack on female voter

Later on Saturday, Iran's chargé d'affaires and deputy head of the mission to the UK, Mehdi Hossieni Matin, said three people have been arrested so far after an attack by foreign-backed affiliated terrorist groups on an Iranian woman who wanted to cast her vote in Birmingham.

In a tweet, he added that Iran's mission is in contact with the woman and his family who were injured in the assault and noted that the terrorists are still



## TEDPIX jumps 14,000 points on Saturday

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), climbed 14,310 points to 1.161 million on Saturday, which is the first day of Iranian calendar week.

Over 8.183 billion securities worth 49.326 trillion rials (about \$1.174 billion) were traded at the TSE on Saturday.

The first market's index gained 10,696 points, and the second market's index rose 28,172 points.

TEDPIX dropped 4,000 points, or less than one percent, in the past Iranian calendar week.

The index closed at 1.147 million points on Wednesday (the last working day of the week).

During the past week, the indices of Iran Khodro Company, Saipa Company, Kourosh Food Industry Company, Leasing Iran-zamin Company, and Zarmakaron Industrial Company were the most widely followed indices.



Mohammad-Ali Dehqan Dehnavi, the head of Iran's Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO), has announced that the organization's advisory council has proposed two new programs for supporting the stock market in the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 21).

The details of the mentioned programs dubbed "capital market policy package to support production and eliminate obstacles" and "the plan to improve the position and performance of the capital market" were presented in a meeting between Dehqan Dehnavi and the members of the SEO Advisory Council.

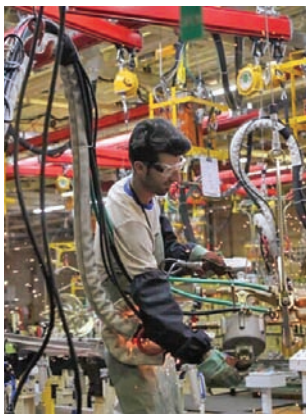
"The capital market has witnessed great changes in the past two years and has grown significantly in terms of size, the volume of activity, and presence of people. These rapid developments have changed some of the equations [in the market]," Dehnavi said following the mentioned meeting.

He emphasized that the structure and facilities of the stock market should be reviewed and modified based on the size and volume of today's market and the issues it faces.

## Manufacturing of 32 major industrial, mining products rises

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — The production of 32 major mining and industrial products has increased in the first two months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-May 21), compared to the same period of time in the past year, according to the Industry, Mining and Trade Ministry data.

As IRNA reported, the mentioned products include all kinds of home appliances (washing machines, refrigerators, air conditioners, etc.), passenger and heavy vehicles, and mining industry products including steel, copper, aluminum, cement, ceramic tiles, etc.



Based on the mentioned data, domestic manufacturers managed to produce 179,600 units of washing machines in the mentioned two months, registering a 40.9 percent increase compared to the previous year's same month.

The production of freezers and refrigerators also increased 29.6 percent to reach 279,600 units.

Some 149,600 TV sets were also produced in the said two months, 25 percent more than the figure for the same period in the last calendar year.

The production of various types of vehicles also increased significantly in the mentioned time span, so that the production of passenger cars registered an 8.8-percent rise compared to the previous year's same two months, reaching 127,700.

During this period, automakers produced 9,477 trucks, which indicates a growth of 12.9 percent.

Also, the production of car tires in the first two months of this year grew by 1.3 percent compared to the previous year and reached 40,200 tons.

According to the Industry Ministry data, some 4.9 million square feet of leather was produced in the mentioned period to register a growth of 27.3 percent.

Also, more than 5,222 million tons of crude steel was produced in the period under review, which indicates a growth of 13.9 percent compared to the same two months last year.

Manufacturing of steel products increased by 4.5 percent as well during this period, to reach 4,300,100 tons.

The growth in the manufacturing of the mentioned products has been achieved despite the specific economic conditions of the country due to the U.S. sanctions and the outbreak of coronavirus which has created problems in the production sector.

Iranian Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry has been following the programs started in the previous year for supporting domestic production also in the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 21) which has been named the year of "Production: Support and Elimination of Obstacles," by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Seyed Ali Khamenei.

These programs include reviving idle units and providing bank facilities for the country's production units and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

The Industry, Mining, and Trade Ministry's programs for the current year have been prepared in seven major axes, according to Deputy Industry Minister Saeed Zarandi.

Development of domestic production, management of imports and development of non-oil exports, development of mines and mining industries, development of technology and knowledge-based products, market management and organization of commercial logistics, improving the business environment and ultimately providing financial resources to the producers and investment development are also among the Industry Ministry's major programs for the current year.

# Capital market's unprecedented growth in 2 years

By Mahnaz Abdi

**TEHRAN** - Over the past two years, a number of factors affecting Iranian economy have created a new status in the country's capital market, in a way that this market experienced such a growth in the past Iranian calendar year 1399 (ended on March 20) that was never seen in its history of more than 50 years.

The fall in oil prices and the reimposition of the U.S. unilateral sanctions on Iran's economy led the Iranian government to turn to the capital market for funding.

On one hand, the government tried to prevent liquidity from going to the markets such as gold and foreign currency, and on the other hand, considering the recent events in the Iranian economy, it also looks at this market with a view of financing, which resulted in the prosperity of this market.

The rising rate of inflation and also that of foreign currency exchange have been also mentioned as two major factors led to the flourishing of the capital market.

In addition to inflation, which has been one of the main drivers of capital market growth in the past two years, another market driver is changing the attitude of government officials towards the capital market and trying to transfer the shares of 18 large state-owned companies through exchange-traded funds (ETFs).

### Establishment of ETFs

In May, 2020, the government sold shares in three banks and two insurance companies via the first exchange-traded fund (dubbed Dara First).

Dara First, listed on Tehran Stock Exchange, which is Iran's major stock exchange,



was the first fund from a series of three ETFs, through them shares of some state-owned organizations and companies are planned to be offered.

The shares to be offered via the mentioned Iranian ETFs belong to those governmental bodies defined in Iran's privatization program, a comprehensive plan seriously followed up by the government to downsize and reduce its role in the economy.

The second ETF (dubbed First Refinery, or Dara Second), which holds government shares in four major oil refining companies, was offered on August 26.

The government also plans to divest shares in giant auto and metal companies through a third ETF (dubbed Dara Third).

### More initial public offerings

In line with the thriving status of the capital market, TSE held more initial public offerings (IPOs), some of them were related to some major entities.

On April 15, Iran's stock market witnessed its largest-ever initial public offering, as Social Security Investment Company (SSIC, also known by its Persian acronym Shasta) offered eight billion shares, which account for 10 percent of its stakes, for sales in Tehran Stock Exchange.

In fact, the market is trying to attract the liquidity existing in the society toward production and development projects, so, many ministries and organizations including the Ministry of Transport and Urban Devel-

opment announced that they are planning to fund their development projects through the stock market.

### Public knowledge of capital market improved

While some economic factors such as reduced banking interest rate, and less profit-making status of the parallel markets including the markets of gold coin, forex, and housing led people to make investment in the capital market, their improved knowledge of this market was also a prominent factor contributing to the capital market's flourishing.

Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) have been taking some major steps in this regard to make people acquainted with the capital market and investment making in this market.

On Wednesday, SEO Head Mohammad-Ali Dehqan Dehnavi said that the capital market has witnessed many changes in the last two years, and in terms of size, volume of activity and presence of people, there has been a significant growth and these rapid changes have changed some equations.

The official also announced that the SEO's Advisory Council has proposed two new programs for supporting the stock market in the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 21).

The mentioned programs dubbed "capital market policy package to support production and eliminate obstacles" and "the plan to improve the position and performance of the capital market" are supposed to expand investment making in the stock market, which can lead to the economic prosperity of society, through controlling liquidity, and even the optimal use of micro-savings.

## Agricultural, foodstuff exports bring Iran \$896m of revenues in 2 months

→ 1 The official further pointed to the major imported items, noting that corn, wheat, barley, soybean meal, and unrefined sugar were the top imported items in terms of weight during this period, while corn with \$334 million of imports, sunflower seed oil with \$265 million, soybean meal with \$230 million, wheat with \$195 million and soybeans with \$175

million were the top five imported items in terms of value.

The value of Iran's non-oil exports reached \$6.3 billion in the first two months of the current Iranian calendar year, up 48 percent compared to the last year's same period.

Iran exported 16.9 million tons of non-oil commodities to foreign destinations in the mentioned two months, according

to Mehdi Mir-Ashrafi, the head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA).

Meanwhile, some 5.3 million tons of goods valued at \$6.5 billion were also imported into the country in the said period to register a 26.5-percent rise compared to the last year's same two months.

## 'Iran can become major paper production hub in region'

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Abolfazl Roghani Golpayegani, the head of the Iranian Syndicate of Paper and Cardboard Manufacturers, has said considering the country's potentials and capacities Iran could easily become a hub for the supply of mentioned products in the region.

"Due to the general conditions and available facilities, Iran has the potential to become a regional production hub in many industries including the paper and cardboard sector," Golpayegani told IRNA on Friday.

Apart from Turkey, which is the largest automaker in the region through cooperation with Italy's Fiat, Iran is the top producer in other industries such as cement, glass, steel,



etc.; it can also become the main supplier of paper to the region's large market, he stated.

According to the official, the government has issued a license for an annual production of 2.8 million tons of packing paper, while

the country's annual production capacity is currently 1.6 million tons and the domestic demand is 900,000 tons per year.

"Therefore, surplus production must be exported, and exports are already underway to Europe, including Germany, Finland and the United Kingdom, as well as Asia and the Persian Gulf Arab nations," he said.

Golpayegani noted that by creating the necessary infrastructure, using the existing vacant capacities and developing the production units, while improving international interactions and resolving the country's political issues, the paper industry can achieve the goal of becoming the region's main supplier.

The head of the Syndicate of Paper and

Cardboard Manufacturers pointed to the supply of raw materials as the main challenge of this industry and said: "Department of Environment is the first authority to approve orders for raw material, but strict regulations by this organization have become an obstacle to the industry's activities."

Currently, the per capita consumption of paper products in Iran is 22 kilograms (kg), while in Europe the figure stands at 55 kg and in the United States is 160 kg.

Also, the annual consumption of textbook paper is 40,000 tons, according to the official.

Some 120,000 tons of sanitary paper is also consumed annually in the country, but the production in this field is more than 200,000 tons.

## Tehran, La Paz mulling over resumption of energy co-op

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN**— Iran's Ambassador to La Paz Morteza Tafreshi has met with Bolivian Minister of Hydrocarbons and Energy Franklin Molina Ortiz, to discuss the resumption of energy cooperation between the two countries, IRNA reported citing Bolivia's El Deber Newspaper.

As reported, the two sides have agreed in the meeting to strongly pursue the issue and take necessary measures for the resumption of oil and gas cooperation between the two countries.

According to Ortiz, the negotiations will be a follow-up on the agreement reached between Bolivian oilfields company [Yacimientos Petroliferos Fiscales Bolivianos or YPFB] and the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) back in 2007.

NIOC and YPFB are also considering the signing of major cooperation agreements in the fields of research and technology in the future, the Bolivian newspaper reported.

Iran and Bolivia have resumed diplomatic relations in late 2020 after more than a year.

Bolivia's new president, Luis Arce, has made good on his pledge to restore relations with Iran and Venezue-



*Iranian Ambassador to La Paz Morteza Tafreshi (R) and Bolivian Minister of Hydrocarbons and Energy Franklin Molina Ortiz*

la a few days after he assumed office. During a formal ceremony in La Paz in November 2020, President Arce

received the credentials of the new ambassadors of Iran and Venezuela, reestablishing diplomatic relations damaged by the previous de-facto government led by interim president Jeanine Anez, according to a statement issued by Bolivia's government.

The restoration of diplomatic ties between Tehran and La Paz came two days after Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif attended Arce's swearing-in ceremony as part of a tour of several Latin American nations that included Venezuela and Cuba.

The chief Iranian diplomat visited Bolivia in early November 2020 and was received by the speaker of the Bolivian parliament. He met with Luis Arce and later participated in his swearing-in ceremony.

Following his victory in Bolivia's presidential election, Arce vowed to re-establish all relations.

"We are going to re-establish all relations. This government has acted very ideologically, depriving the Bolivian people of access to Cuban medicine, Russian medicine, and advances in China. For a purely ideological issue, it has exposed the population in a way unnecessary and harmful," Arce said.

## IME hosts offering of 59,000 tons of steel

developed, and through implementing different projects in recent years a good market has been formed for the steel and steel products, but there is still some controversy over the prices, and some dispute between the upstream and downstream industries in this regard.

Offering the complete steel chain at Iran Mercantile Exchange is said to be the solution to this problem.

It is believed to put an end to all the challenges in terms of price, as this strategy will let the market discover the real price, considering the benefits of upstream and downstream units.

Also as stated by the IME Managing Director Hamed Soltaninejad, the IME lays the ground for transparent competition.

He says that if the complete chain of steel is offered in this exchange, transparency will dominate trades in the whole steel sector.

"Transparency should not be just for some sectors of the industry, while the whole industry including the downstream sector should enjoy transparent condition", according to Soltaninejad.

IME is one of the four major stock markets of Iran, the other three markets are Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), Iran's



over-the-counter (OTC) market known also as Iran Fara Bourse (IFB), and Iran Energy Exchange (IRENEX).



# S. Arabia has lost its cards in Yemen: analyst

→ **1** lifting the siege in exchange for stopping targeting Saudi Arabia and freezing military operations inside Yemen, including the process of restoring the city of Marib in eastern Yemen, which is the last stronghold of the Saudi-led coalition in northern Yemen, or continuing embargo and more sanctions.

Sana'a has rejected this deal in whole and in detail and stipulated the lifting of the siege without expecting something in return, as well as the withdrawal of the Saudi and Emirati forces and all foreign forces from the south of the country.

This is a very big achievement and progress for Yemenis that did not exist during the past years.

In all cases, and according to the current developments, the coalition not only failed, but prompted Saudi Arabia and the Emirates to search for a gradual retreat, and it is now clear that Sanaa has achieved two strategic goals:

The first is to preserve the revolution and to remove Yemen from the U.S. and (Persian) Gulf camp that has lasted for decades.

The second is putting Yemen on an anti-U.S. axis that is a real threat to some (Persian) Gulf countries. This shift means that the American axis has failed after years of unremitting efforts and billions of dollars.

The first objective of the aggressive war on Yemen was to return it to the arms of America, through blocking efforts for change, and to impose more hegemony within two axes:

The first is a regional axis that ensures the existence of America's allies in the region, and the second is international and within the conflict with Iran, China and Russia. In a word, the two axes are the continuation of dominance over the Bab al-Mandab Strait and the coasts of the Red Sea and Arab Sea or the Indian Ocean.

All the headlines that were raised and announced in the media, including the restoration of the government of Abd Rabbuh Mansour Hadi, are considered marginal.

Saudi Arabia is currently in a predicament after losing its military and political reputation and is also threatened by political and economic instability.

The goals of the Saudi crown prince and Saudi rulers will not be realized as long as the war remains open, and therefore it will be the biggest loser.

**How do you see the level of coordination between the Yemeni resistance with other resistance groups in Iraq, Lebanon, and Palestine?**

Yemen has become practically and openly within the axis of resistance; it is an important stronghold and a great addition to the axis, especially given its geopolitical geography is very pivotal in terms of supervising one of the most important seaports, Bab al-Mandab, as well as part of the map of the Chinese Silk Road. The Israeli statements were clear about their fear of Yemen playing an important role in blocking the movement of the Israelis in the Red Sea.

The other matter is the military future of Yemen, as the predictions say that Yemen will turn into a large military force, which is not far from the occupied Palestinian territories. The offer of Abdul Malik Badr Al-Din Al-Houthi, the leader of the revolution, to send military assistance to the



Palestinian resistance factions in last war, Seif Al-Quds, signals an important change in the regional balances. It is very important, and the Palestinian resistance factions commented on that with much praise and belief that this is a major shift on the path to liberating Palestine. This was not a slogan, but rather Yemen currently possesses winged missiles and drones whose range reaches the Palestinian territories. All the resistance factions have representatives in Sana'a, and there is clear coordination.

**What is the status of the Palestinian cause among the Yemenis? What are the reasons for Yemeni support for Palestine?**

The Yemeni people view the Palestinian cause from a religious ideological standpoint. Al-Quds and Al-Aqsa Mosque are sacred lands and must be liberated.

The other matter is that America seeks hegemony over the Yemeni people, which constitutes a real threat to Islam and Muslims.

The U.S. has committed war crimes against Yemeni people that are not permissible. Yemeni people cannot remain silent or form a coalition with the United States of America, which represents an existential threat to Islam.

The Yemeni people also look at the Palestinian cause from a nationalistic point of view. Palestine is an Arab land that must be liberated, and this appears through the broad popular response in demonstrations and marches in solidarity with the Palestinian people on all occasions, including the International Quds Day.

Therefore, the Yemeni people are still part of the Arab nations. The new development is that the Ansar Allah Islamic Movement has now become the ruling political front in the country, and this movement led by Abdul Malik Badr Al-Din Al-Houthi succeeded in changing the failed and puppet traditional system, which did not represent the Yemeni Islamic and religious identity.

This shows the volume of support for this popular movement, which is a major shift in the future of the country, especially its active role in making and influencing the decision in the region in the future.

**What will be the fate of the peace negotiations between Yemen and Saudi Arabia? Who are the mediators in peace talks?**

Negotiations still have a long road to reach results. It was clear that the Omani delegation that went to the Yemeni capital, Sana'a, to meet with officials was expected more than what it could carry out, and therefore hopes were opened wide to reach an end to the war on Yemen, lifting the siege, and opening Sana'a International Airport, which has been closed since 2017.

There are many reasons for this reliance on the Omani role, the first of which is the positive position of the Sultanate of Oman and its great efforts in playing the role of mediator between the various regional and international parties, as well as its embrace of the Yemeni national negotiating team, as it has been leading this role for years.

Among these reasons is the Yemenis' confidence in Omanis, and hence some observers confused the mission of the sultanate's delegation with the chaos of political analysis and deductions based on wrong information. Especially since it coincides with a great regional and international diplomatic move, from which it was understood that the final touches are being put in steps to stop the war that has been going on for six-and-a-quarter years.

But the reality says: First, the delegation does not have an Omani initiative to be presented to various parties, if so the Sultan of Oman would have presented it to officials in the capital, Sana'a, and if that was the case, this initiative would have been announced.

Secondly, the official Omani media, even the unofficial ones, did not issue a statement explaining the mission of the delegation, and the official media were limited to referring to the presence of this delegation in Yemen. This necessarily means that the delegation, despite its importance, does not exceed its mission as a continuation of efforts to bring the views closer and try to overcome the obstacles to address the crisis and support the process of negotiations that do not move much.

Third, the official statements made by the chief Yemeni negotiator and head of the national negotiating team, Muhammad Abd al-Salam, who accompanied the Omani

delegation, whether made during arrival or during departure, were limited to praising the humanitarian role of the Sultanate of Oman and referring to the establishment of humanitarian arrangements in an effort to (to mitigate the suffering of our Yemeni people) as Muhammad Abd al-Salam says, and this means that efforts are focused on trying to separate the humanitarian file and lift the siege on the civil international airport of Sana'a, as well as the port of Hodeidah from the political and military files.

Whoever follows the statement issued by the ruling Supreme Political Council in the capital, Sana'a, which followed the meeting of Al-Mashat and members of the Political Council with the Omani delegation who praised the position and role of the Sultanate, will find that he focused on three main points, one of which is very important, which is the point related to the necessity of the withdrawal of Saudi, Emirati and foreign forces from all Yemeni lands before talking about any ceasefire initiative, as well as lifting the siege and opening Yemeni airspace for civilian flights as a legitimate, humanitarian and sovereign right of the Republic of Yemen.

The statement summarizes the Yemeni vision that was presented to the Omani side, and therefore the mission that the royal delegation carried out did not go beyond the fact that Oman wanted to know directly from the office of Mr. Abdul-Malik Badr al-Din Al-Houthi, as the leader of the revolution, towards the various issues being discussed.

They wanted to address the major reasons for the failure of the United Nations and the failure of Biden's envoy to Yemen, during the past few months.

The mission of the Omani royal delegation can be described as being limited to knowing Sana'a's point of view, ideas, and approaches to a comprehensive solution in Yemen, and then transferring it to the other side.

Therefore, this is an Omani effort that cannot be talked about its failure or success. In the end, it is a humanistic effort, an effort that its results cannot be discussed.

Some went on to think that the Sultanate of Oman intended to present an initiative of its own to Sana'a, and linked the visit of the Omani Foreign Minister Badr al-Busaidi and his delivery of a message from Sultan Haitham bin Tariq to King Salman and the delegation that flew to the capital Sana'a.

Therefore, the failure of the "Omani initiative" would mean that the position of the Sultanate has changed over Yemen. This perception and description is inaccurate and goes beyond the pivotal and important strategic role that Oman plays for all parties, a role that stems from its stance and vision of the crisis in Yemen.

Some Arab newspapers and Saudi analysts worked a lot in this direction and hinted in one way or another to their dissatisfaction with the Omani role.

They made every effort to ruin the Omani-Yemeni relationship and its mediating role in trying to solve the crisis by receiving delegations and coordinating meetings between the various parties, within a humanitarian and political framework to stop the aggression on Yemen and the ongoing war, including hosting the (secret) Yemeni-Saudi dialogue.

## Yemen's Ansarullah will "enter equation" to defend al-Quds

Yemen's popular Ansarullah movement says it will be involved should a broader conflict breakout over the Israeli regime's violations at the holy al-Aqsa Mosque in occupied Jerusalem al-Quds.

Speaking to the Lebanese-based al-Mayadeen news channel, a member of Ansarullah's political bureau says the movement "will be part of the equation in defense of the holy city of Jerusalem al-Quds." Abd al-Wahhab al-Mahbashi says, unlike the Arab League, which takes no action, Israel pays attention to resistance movements in the region. The official also noted that Israel and the United Arab Emirates are coordinating together on the construction of a mysterious military airbase on the Yemeni Island of Mayyun, also known as Perim. The volcanic island sits in the strait of Mandeb at the southern entrance of the Red Sea. Ansarullah has played a key role in the National Salvation Government. Along with the Yemeni armed forces, it has bravely resisted Saudi Arabia's war on Yemen. Riyadh launched its bombing campaign on Yemen in March 2015, waging almost daily airstrikes using western made weapons on residential areas. Tens of thousands of civilians have been killed as a result, many of them women and children. Riyadh has also imposed a land, air and sea blockade on its southern neighbor leading to what the United Nations describes as the worst humanitarian crisis in the world. Over the past two years, Ansarullah has proven to be a force to be reckoned with. It has designed indigenous missiles and drones, using them to launch retaliatory attacks on Saudi military sites and oil facilities. On Saturday, Yemen's armed forces retaliated for the second time in as many days. Army Spokesman Yayha Sare'e says eight drones targeted the South of the Kingdom, including the King Khalid military base near the Saudi city of Khamis Mushait. Yemeni forces are also close to liberating Ma'arib, the last Saudi stronghold in Yemen. Many experts say it is widely believed that the Saudis have now lost the war they started and are looking for a peaceful way out. Riyadh wanted to re-instate its former ally, President Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi, back to power, despite Hadi's tenure ending in 2014 and his refusal to leave office.

## 682 politicians, academics ask Biden to protect Palestinians' human rights

As many as 682 political figures, academics, peace activists, and Nobel laureates have called on U.S. President Joe Biden to honor his commitments regarding protection of Palestinian rights, and to end the Israel's oppression.

The signatories, in an open letter published earlier this week, urged Biden to place "human rights at the center of U.S. foreign policy" and to "help bring an end to Israel's institutionalized domination and oppression of the Palestinian people".

"A sustainable and just peace - for all people - will remain elusive if U.S. policy holds to a political status quo devoid of justice and accountability," the letter read.

"Moving forward, the United States must address the root causes of the violence, which successive administrations have neglected.

"Your administration must apply concerted diplomatic pressure to help end the ever-expanding discrimination and systemic oppression and ensure accountability for Israeli authorities that violate Palestinian rights," the group wrote.

The signatories included Israel's former attorney general Michael Ben-Yair; former Knesset speaker Avraham Burg; former Irish President Mary Robinson; 2011 Nobel Peace Prize laureate Tawakkol Karman; Israeli academic Ilan Pappé; American professor Noam Chomsky; and a number of British lawmakers among others.

According to Press TV, at least 260 Palestinians, including 66 children, were killed in the Israeli bombardment of the Gaza Strip in 11 days of the war that began on May 10. Israel's airstrikes also brought widespread devastation to the already impoverished territory.

## Saudi Arabia to execute 40 teens

Human Rights activists have raised the alarm over plans by Saudi Arabia to execute more than 40 teenagers. According to monitoring group Saudi Leaks, the shocking revelation comes just a week after the Kingdom carried out the death penalty for Mustafa al-Darwish, who was sentenced for alleged crimes committed as a minor. Leading international rights groups say Mustafa was arrested, tortured, held in solidarity confinement and limited access to an attorney for taking part in anti-monarchy protests during the Islamic Awakening uprising across the region, also known as the Arab Spring in 2011.

It's not the first time over the past years that the Saudi monarchy has carried out mass executions. Should the execution of over 40 minors convicted of similar offenses as Mustafa go ahead, it will more than likely lead to international outcry, similar to those in the past.

## Resistance News

## Sheikh Taweel enters day 17 of his hunger strike

**INTERNATIONAL DESK** **TEHRAN**— Senior Hamas official Sheikh Jamal at-Taweel has entered day 17 of his open-ended hunger strike, which he staged to demand Israeli jailers to release him and his daughter, Bushra, from administrative detention.

Sheikh Taweel was kidnapped on June 2, 2021 from his home in Bireh City by the Israeli occupation forces (IOF) before he was transferred to the Ofer jail and later to the Hasharon jail.

Recently, the Ofer jail's military court ordered his administrative detention for six months.

As for Bushra who works as a journalist, she was kidnapped by the IOF at a military checkpoint in the West Bank on November 9, 2020 before a military court issued an administrative prison order for four months against her.

However, before the four months completed, another extension to the previous administrative detention order was issued against her on March 7, 2021.

Meanwhile, other two prisoners have been on hunger strike for several days in protest at their detention administratively.

The detainees are Ghadhanfar Abu Atwan, on hunger strike for 46 days, and Khader Adnan, on hunger strike for 21 days.

## U.S. redeploying military hardware in West Asia

→ **1** It does, however, represent a sharp reduction in military hardware deployed to the region at the height of military tensions between the U.S. and Iran around two years ago. The Wall Street report cites there is now less friction between Washington and Tehran amid indirect talks to revive the 2015 Iran Nuclear Deal in the Austrian capital Vienna. This comes as the Biden administration has announced a military withdrawal from Afghanistan on September 11, two decades after invading the country. Biden's announcement did, however mean Washington missed a May deadline agreed between the Taliban and former President Donald Trump's administration to end the American occupation of the country. This has triggered an angry reaction from the militant group, with a sharp rise in violence between Afghan government forces and the militants. Intra-Afghan talks in Doha, Qatar, to find some common ground towards security is also proving difficult. Despite the removal of missile batteries, the U.S. will maintain its troops' presence in Iraq and Syria. The Pentagon says "This decision was made in close coordination with host nations and with a clear eye on preserving our ability to meet our security commitments. We maintain a robust force posture in the region appropriate to the threat and are comfort-



able that these changes do not negatively impact our national security interests. We also retain the flexibility to rapidly flow forces back into West Asia as conditions warrant". The Pentagon added that "The Defense Department maintains tens of thousands of forces in West Asia, representing some of our most advanced air power and maritime capabilities, in support of U.S. national

interests and our regional partnerships." The Wall Street Journal report says the redeployments represent a shift in foreign policy from Washington, which views China and Russia as posing a greater threat than the alleged terrorism threat in West Asia. Beijing has denounced recent statements published at the NATO and G7 summits last week, which warned against China's alleged security threats. The final communique by the G7 meeting held in England scolded China over a host of issues that are considered highly sensitive for Beijing. These included alleged human rights violations in Xinjiang and Hong Kong, a "transparent" second study into the origins of covid-19 and "concerns" regarding the East and South China Seas as well as "peace and stability" across the Taiwan Strait. China hit back, saying "the days of small groups of countries ruling the world are long gone." Meanwhile, a meeting between U.S. President Joe Biden, and his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin, in Geneva, Switzerland, ended without a joint press conference. Washington accuses Moscow of increasing cybercrimes such as ransomware attacks and recent interference in U.S. Presidential elections. Russia has rejected the accusations, with Putin saying the U.S. has not provided any evidence to back up its claims.

## Palestinians reject "expiring" vaccines from Israel

The Palestinian Prime Minister has ordered the Palestinian Authority to return the first batch of about one million doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech coronavirus vaccine back to Israel because the doses are set to expire very soon. PA Spokesman Ibrahim Melhem says, "Prime minister Mohammad Shtayyeh

instructed the Minister of Health to cancel the agreement with the Israeli side on transferring the vaccine and to return the quantity that was received today back to Israel. The prime minister confirmed that the government refuses to receive vaccines that are about to expire. All the technical teams concerned with the

vaccine file at the Ministry of Health worked on communicating intensively and constantly with the parent American company that manufactured the Pfizer vaccine in order to determine a clear and close period of time for receiving the quantity that was contracted to be purchased from the company."

As an occupying power, Israel has an obligation under international law to provide health services to Palestinians living under its occupation. Rights groups and international organizations have strongly condemned the regime for inoculating Israeli settlers while refusing to vaccinate the Palestinians.



## Alamut Castle: a visit to once impenetrable fortress of ‘Assassins’

➔1 Most visitors -- virtually all Iranian -- regard the gorgeous mountain-rimmed valley as an idyllic weekend retreat. Villages and hamlets dot its floor and sides; cornfields and rice paddies occupy parcels of land between ravines, and irregular terraced plateaus ruffle the valley's picturesque undulating terrain.



Qazvin was once the capital of the mighty Persian Empire, under Safavids, from 1548 to 98. It is a major tourist destination with a wonderfully restored caravanserai-turned-arts precinct, some quirky museums, and a handful of decent eating options. For most travelers, Qazvin is also primarily the staging point for excursions to the famed castle of “Assassins”.

## Glassware workshops open near Tehran

**TOURISM d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Two handmade glassware workshops were inaugurated on Saturday in Robat Karim, Tehran province.

The workshops, which were established in the rural areas, are expected to generate 15 job opportunities, Robat Karim's tourism chief has said.



Local young people are provided with sustainable employment through the workshops, CHTN quoted Hamid Karimi as saying. They are also expected to reinforce handicraft sales and lay the ground for training rural women, the official added.

The official noted that developing handicrafts fields could reverse the rural-to-urban migration trend.

Glasswork objects constitute a majority of Tehran province's exports of handicrafts.

Glass blowing is a glass-forming technique that humans have used to shape glass since the 1st century BC. The technique consists of inflating molten glass with a blowpipe to form a sort of glass bubble that can be molded into glassware for practical or artistic purposes.

Robat Karim is home to many historical and cultural monuments due once being placed on the important historical Silk Road.

## Monuments in Fars added to national heritage list

**HERITAGE d e s k** **TEHRAN** — A total of ten historical buildings and aging monuments across Fars province have been added to the National Heritage list.

The Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts on Thursday announced the inscriptions in a letter to the governor-general of the southern province, CHTN reported.

Jamal Tiregol Mansion, Shirian, Masjedu, Lit castles, and Asadi Bridge are among the properties inscribed on the list.



The ancient region of Fars, also spelled Pars or Persis, was the heart of the Achaemenian Empire (550–330 BC), which was founded by Cyrus the Great and had its capital at Pasargadae. Darius I the Great moved the capital to nearby Persepolis in the late 6th or early 5th century BC.

The capital city of Shiraz is home to some of the country's most magnificent buildings and sights. Increasingly, it draws more and more foreign and domestic sightseers flocking into this provincial capital which was the literary capital of Persia during the Zand dynasty from 1751 to 1794.

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# Mazandaran exports \$2m of handicrafts in year

➔1 It seems necessary to come up with innovative plans, new designs, and capacities for developing handicraft exports, the official added.

Meanwhile, the crafters of the province earned 310 billion rials (\$7.4 million at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials per dollar) from the domestic sales of handicrafts during the mentioned time, he explained.

With 14 entries, Iran ranks first globally for the number of cities and villages registered by the World Crafts Council, as China with seven entries, Chile with four, and India with three ones come next.

In January 2020, the cities of Shiraz, Malayer, and Zanjan and the village of Qasemabad were designated by the WCC- Asia Pacific Region, putting Iran's number of world crafts cities and villages from ten to 14.

Shiraz was named a “world city of [diverse] handicrafts”. Malayer was made a global hub for woodcarving and carved-wood furniture. Zanjan gained the title of a “world city of filigree”. And Qasemabad



village, which is nationally known for its traditional costumes, was also promoted to a world hub of handicrafts. Chador Shab,

a kind of homemade outer garment for women, was, however, the main subject for the WCC assessment for the village.

## Virtual reality to turn spotlight on water tourism in Yazd

**HERITAGE d e s k** **TEHRAN** — If the purpose of heritage museums is to build a bridge between the past and present, then virtual reality (VR) is undeniably one of the most innovative construction tools at their disposal.

In a recent agreement reached between Yazd Water Museum and two Iranian startups, the museum, which features a lesser-known world of qanats, underground aqueducts, and primitive irrigation systems in the oasis city, will be subject to a VR project.

Virtual reality is exactly as the name suggests a technology that audibly and visually transports people to another place or time. It is a powerful tool that has become commonplace in industries like video gaming over the last few years, but there are also a growing number of museums and heritage sites putting VR to good use, too.

In July 2017, the historical structure of the city of Yazd was named a UNESCO World Heritage. Wedged between the northern Dasht-e Kavir and the southern Dasht-e Lut on a flat plain, the oasis city enjoys a very harmonious public-religious architecture that

dates from different eras.

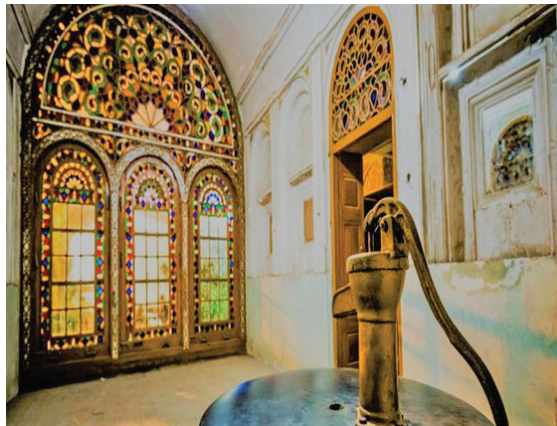
Yazd is usually referred to as a delightful place to stay, or a “don't miss” destination by almost all of its visitors.

Water is brought to the city by the qanat system. Each district of the city is built on a qanat and has a communal center. The concept of Persian Qanat was registered on the UNESCO World Heritage list in 2016 as they provide exceptional testimony to cultural traditions and civilizations in desert areas with an arid climate.

The use of earth in buildings includes walls and roofs by the construction of vaults and domes. Houses are built with courtyards below ground level, serving underground areas. Wind-catchers, courtyards, and thick earthen walls create a pleasant microclimate.

Partially covered alleyways together with streets, public squares and courtyards contribute to a pleasant urban quality. The city escaped the modernization trends that destroyed many traditional earthen cities.

It survives today with its traditional districts, the qanat system, traditional houses, bazaars, hammams,



water cisterns, mosques, synagogues, Zoroastrian temples, and the historic garden of Dolat-Abad. The city enjoys the peaceful coexistence of three religions: Islam, Judaism, and Zoroastrianism.

## Holy shrine in central Iran gets refurbishment

**TOURISM d e s k** **TEHRAN** — A restoration project has been commenced on the holy shrine of Imamzadeh Havva Khatun in the village of Moot-Abad near the central city of Arak, Markazi province, the provincial tourism chief has said.

A budget of 500 million rials (\$12,000 at the official exchange rate of 42,000 rials

per dollar) has been allocated to the project which aims at lightening and strengthening the rooftop using traditional materials, Mostafa Marzban said on Saturday.

Originally built in the 11th century, the shrine was rebuilt and developed during the Ilkhanid (1256–1353) and Safavid (1501–1736) eras, the official added.

Markazi province is considered the industrial capital of the country. It is rich in natural, historical, cultural, and religious attractions.

Hand-woven carpets and kilims, made in its cities including Farahan, Sarugh, Lilivan, Senejan, and Vafs are known on the international scene.



## Massive Seljuk inscription restored in Khorramabad

**TOURISM d e s k** **TEHRAN** — A team of specialized Iranian restorers has finalized work on a massive inscription, which dates back to the Seljuk era (1037–1194). The ancient object is being kept in Khorramabad, the capital of Lorestan province.

“Restoration of a historical inscription came to an end last week in the city of Khorramabad [the capital of Lorestan province] by a specialized team of restorers, who have carried out projects on magnificent sites such as Persepolis, Pasargadae, Ganjnameh, and Bisotun,” CHTN quoted the provincial tourism chief, Seyyed Amin Qasemi, as saying on Saturday.

The restorers avoided using chemicals to preserve the authenticity and to increase the strength of the petroglyph, the official explained.

Originally carved in Persian using the Kufic script by order of a local Seljuk ruler (1037–1194), the petroglyph expresses provisions on tax forgiveness, the grazing of livestock in Shapurkhash pastures, and the prohibition of some bad habits, he added.



The historical property has been inscribed on the National Heritage list.

Soaked in history and culture, Lorestan is one of

the lesser-known travel destinations in Iran, which mainly acts as a gateway to the sweltering plains below in adjoining Khuzestan province. Most travelers just pass through on their way to the UNESCO sites of Susa, Tchoghja Zambil, and Shushtar Historical Hydraulic System. Lorestan is also a region of raw beauty that an avid nature lover could spend weeks exploring.

Lorestan was inhabited by Iranian Indo-European peoples, including the Medes, c. 1000 BC. Cimmerians and Scythians intermittently ruled the region from about 700 to 625 BC. Lorestan was incorporated into the growing Achaemenid Empire in about 540 BC and successively was part of the Seleucid, Parthian, and Sasanid dynasties.

Seljuk, also spelled, Seljuq, was a ruling military family of the Oguz (Ghuzz) Turkic tribes that invaded southwestern Asia in the 11th century and eventually founded an empire that included Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine, and most of Iran. Their advance marked the beginning of Turkish power in West Asia.

## Iranian handicrafts: Sarouk carpets of Arak

**HERITAGE d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Little is known about the history of handwoven carpets being made in Arak, the capital of Markazi province, and its surrounding villages.

Sarouk is one of the most famous carpets woven in the province. In comparison with other kinds, it is the thigh and rather fine. Local weavers use a special kind of method to insert the wefts. After each row, they insert two wefts, and between each five to ten rows another weft is inserted.

Sarouk patterns are inspired by cursive arabesque patterns of Isfahan carpets, but they are recreated with fewer details and in a red background, and paisley in the form of diamond in blue, according to Visit Iran.

Sarouk with the pattern of paisley can also be found in Qom, Qazvin, Saveh, and Golpaygan. Sarouk weavers usually dec-

orate the margins using “Samavari” and “Kharchangi” and classic “Shah Abbasi” motifs. A historical sample of Sarouk carpet was used in the bedroom of Reza Shah, the founder of the Pahlavi dynasty, and is now kept in Tehran's Green Palace Museum. It has been designed by plain paisleys and woven of silk.

Based on the designs, Sarouk carpets can be categorized into four periods. First, designs from more than one hundred years ago when Arak carpets changed a trading product. During the second period, foreign trading companies developed in Arak. This period dates from the beginning of the reign of Naser al-Din Shah Qajar to the early years of the Pahlavi dynasty. The buyers had their special culture and taste and, therefore, designs were heavily affected by European motifs and color palettes.

It was during these years that using fine threads called “Farangi (foreigner)” became common.

The third period lasted from 1310 to 1370 (the 1930s to 1970s) when, by the efforts of the Institute of Fine Arts, the carpets of Arak and some other cities were restored. In the fourth phase, which is still going on, the Arak carpets are produced locally.

Persian carpets are sought after internationally for their delicate designs and their good quality. Among Persian carpets, particularly those of the classic period, the medallion may represent an open lotus blossom with 16 petals as seen from above, a complex star form, or a quatrefoil with pointed lobes.

Medallion carpet is any floor covering on which the decoration is dominated by a single symmetrical centerpiece, such



as a star-shaped, circular, quatrefoil, or octagonal figure. The name, however, is sometimes also given to a carpet on which the decoration consists of several forms of this kind or even of rows of medallion figures.



# Iranian hospitality for refugees impressive despite challenges

→ **1** However, in light of the pandemic, all refugees, even those undocumented, benefited from access to free primary health services and free COVID-19 related testing, treatment, and hospitalization, just like Iranian nationals.

The same happened for the vaccination when the country has generously considered refugees over the age of 75 for vaccination against coronavirus.

This is while, Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) has asked the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to provide 2 million doses of vaccine to inoculate Afghan refugees. So far, there has been no attempt made by the international community in this regard.

It is noteworthy to say that, COVID-19 has shown us that we are all connected to each other, and without a global response, the pandemic will not be eradicated unless everyone in society is included within national health policies, including refugees, asylum seekers, and even those with uncertain legal status.

**Afghan refugees receive free treatment amid coronavirus**

Iran ramped up its production of essential medical equipment, and independent entrepreneurs – refugees included – have redirected their efforts towards contributing to the national COVID-19 response.

However, the coronavirus shows no sign of abating and, with a socio-economic environment placed under additional strain, Iran needs more support to be able to help the increasing number of people affected by the virus, including refugees.

In order to support the refugees living in the country, the seventh phase of the health insurance plan will cover 120,000 vulnerable refugees through a memorandum of understanding signed between the Health Insurance Organization and the United Nations High



Commissioner for Refugees.

In Iran, UNHCR is seeking \$16.2 million for its COVID-19 emergency, while requires an additional \$98.7 million to support Iran in maintaining and sustaining its commendable inclusive refugee policies, under the umbrella of the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR).

## Supports for Afghan refugees in Iran

Iran spends about 20 trillion rials (nearly \$477 million at the official rate of 42,000 rials) every year on the education of foreign national students residing in the country, head of the international affairs department of the Ministry of Education Gholamreza Karimi said in March.

**In light of the pandemic, all refugees, even those undocumented, benefited from access to free primary health services and free COVID-19 related testing, treatment, and hospitalization, just like Iranian nationals. The country has generously considered refugees over the age of 75 for vaccination against coronavirus.**

## World refugee Day 2021: Together we can heal, learn and shine

Over the course of the past year, the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted all facets of life, causing millions of deaths around the world and leading to human suffering, economic recession, restrictions on mobility and severe limitations on daily life. Iran was one of the first countries impacted by the virus and still today, we all continue to struggle to get our normal lives back.

We have all been affected. But refugees, who often are among the most vulnerable in society, have been particularly badly hit. In our work in Iran with UNHCR, the United Nations Refugee Agency, and WFP, the World Food Programme, we speak with refugees every day who tell us that the pandemic not only affected their health, but also severely impacted their livelihoods. Month after month, more people tell us that they can no longer afford food, pay rent and make ends meet.

But despite their challenges, today on World Refugee Day, we celebrate the resilience and courage with which refugees have stepped up and joined the fight against the virus in Iran.

All over the country, refugees like the young Roya in Sarvestan settlement in Shiraz started sewing masks and gowns for health workers, in workshops supported by UNHCR and WFP. Others worked tirelessly as doctors and nurses, tending to the needs of Iranians and foreigners alike. Every day, Dr Hosseini, an Afghan refugee doctor in Esfahan, spends hours advising other Afghans in her community on how to keep healthy and safe – on top of her working hours as a Head Physician.

The pandemic showed us that everyone has a role to play to fight the virus, and that no one is protected until we are all protected.

That is why since the onset of the pandemic UNHCR and WFP – along with our UN sister agencies and NGO partners – mobilized quickly to bring in large numbers of masks, face shields, gowns, hand sanitizers, gloves, ventilators and non-contact thermometers to help address critical shortages in the national health system and support the government's COVID-19 response, to which refugees have access.

We applaud Iran for very quickly realizing that only by working together can we create a safer and healthier society. Globally speaking, Iran continues to stand out as a very positive example of a refugee-hosting country giving refugees access to basic services – so refugees can thrive, not just survive.

People forced to flee their homes often struggle to find doctors to care for them when they're sick, schools for their children or even a place for the younger ones run around and play. In Iran, refugees can get the health care they need and all children can go to school. School does more than teach children math and language skills – it provides them a safe place to grow and learn basic life skills, such as cooperation, responsibility and respect.

When all children can go to school, communities grow stronger. When all children can go to school, they become able to hope for and build better futures for themselves and their families.

And hope for the future has been hard to find across the globe. People were forced to flee their homes throughout the past year despite the urgent appeal from the UN Secretary-General on 23 March 2020 calling for a global ceasefire to enable a concerted response to the pandemic. By the end of 2020, the number of people forcibly displaced around the world due to persecution, conflict, violence, human rights violations and events seriously disturbing public order had grown to 82.4 million, the highest number on record according to available data.

Based on the statistics received by the Government of Iran in October 2020, on which consultations are ongoing, there are over 3 million Afghans in Iran – some 780,000 Afghan refugees (out of 800,000 refugee cardholders), over 2 million undocumented Afghans and another 600,000 Afghan passport-holders with Iranian visas. In 2020, there were 5.8 million forcibly displaced Afghans and Afghan returnees globally.

This World Refugee Day, we call on communities and governments around the world to include refugees – in health

Over 474,000 Afghan national children are receiving education in Iran completely free of charge, he added.

Out of 970,000 foreigners (men and women) in working-age of 15 to 60 years, some 36,000 are under social insurance coverage in the country, head of Social Security Organization's department for foreign nationals Ahmad Reza Khazaei said in July 2018.

Iran is host to one of the largest and most protracted refugee populations worldwide.

## Refugees in the world

Every minute 20 people leave everything behind to escape war, persecution, or terror. There are several types of forcibly displaced persons, including, refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons, stateless persons, returnees.

Refugees are among the most vulnerable people in the world. The 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol help protect them. They are the only global legal instruments explicitly covering the most important aspects of a refugee's life. According to their provisions, refugees deserve, as a minimum, the same standards of treatment enjoyed by other foreign nationals in a given country and, in many cases, the same treatment as nationals.

The 1951 Convention contains a number of rights and also highlights the obligations of refugees towards their host country. The cornerstone of the 1951 Convention is the principle of non-refoulement. According to this principle, a refugee should not be returned to a country where he or she faces serious threats to his or her life or freedom. This protection may not be claimed by refugees who are reasonably regarded as a danger to the security of the country, or having been convicted of a particularly serious crime, are considered a danger to the community.



care, education and sport.

Our shared human condition and values must be a source of unity, not division. Now more than ever, as Afghanistan stands at critical historical juncture, we need to stand by displaced

Afghans who have borne the cost of years of conflict, and assure them that they have not been forgotten.

We hope that you will join us to advocate for refugees to be given the tools, skills and support they need to become self-reliant, independent, and able to help their communities. This include making sure Afghans get the vaccine at the same time as Iranians – a cause dear to UNHCR and WFP, as we jointly advocate for Iran to receive more doses of the vaccine for everyone.

Iran, for more than 40 years, have stepped up and done all they could for refugees. Now more than ever, the international community needs to help Iran shoulder this humanitarian responsibility. Meanwhile, the UN continues to work in Afghanistan, to ensure refugees have a safe place to return to one-day.

Together we can heal. Together we can learn. Together we can shine.

By Ivo Freijssen, UNHCR representative to Iran and Negar Gerami, WFP representative to Iran

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ع

## Afghanistan thanks Iran for free services to refugees during COVID-19

Afghanistan has appreciated Iran for offering health and treatment services to Afghan refugees infected with coronavirus free of charge.

The Afghan Foreign Ministry in a statement on Saturday announced its gratitude and appreciation to Iran for its humanitarian efforts to address the issue of Afghan refugees in the country.

All measures, especially the recent decree by the Iranian president to provide free medical treatment to Afghan refugees in Iranian public hospitals, have assured the Afghan government, IRNA reported on Sunday.

According to the Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, providing transportation services to transit trucks and providing the necessary health assistance to vulnerable Afghan nationals are among the measures that are highly appreciated.

## افغانستان از همکاری ایران برای مداوای مهاجران مبتلا به کرونا قدردانی کرد

وزارت امور خارجه افغانستان از کمک و همکاری جمهوری اسلامی ایران به مهاجران افغانی مبتلا به ویروس کرونا و مداوای رایگان آنها قدردانی کرد. وزارت امور خارجه افغانستان روز شنبه در اطلاعیهای اعلام کرد: مراتب امتنان و سپاسگزاری خود را از جمهوری اسلامی ایران در رابطه به اقدامات بشردوستانه آن کشور درباره رسیدگی به مهاجرین افغان در آن کشور ابراز می‌دارد.

در این اطلاعیه آمده است: تمام اقدامات به ویژه صدور حکم اخیر رئیس جمهوری ایران برای درمان رایگان مهاجران افغان در بیمارستان های دولتی ایران موجب خاطر جمعی رهبری دولت افغانستان شد.

براساس اطلاعیه وزارت خارجه افغانستان، ایجاد تسهیلات در رفت و آمد کامیون های ترانزیتی و فراهم آوری مساعدت های لازم بهداشتی برای مهاجران در مناطق آسیب پذیر آن کشور اقداماتی هستند که از جانب دولت افغانستان به چشم قدردانی نگریسته می‌شوند.

## COVID-19 UPDATES

The statistics are related to 24 hours started 2:00 p.m. June 18

New cases	6,448
New deaths	108
Total cases	3,086,974
Total deaths	82,854
New hospitalized patients	931
Patients in critical condition	3,307
Total recovered patients	2,736,013
Diagnostic tests conducted	22,321,457
Doses of vaccine injected	5,281,275

## Iranian universities can admit up to 90,000 foreign students

**SOCIETY TEHRAN** – A total of 57,000 foreign students are studying in Iran, which can be increased to 90,000 considering the capacity of universities, Farid Rahimi, head of the non-Iranian students' affairs at the Ministry of Science has stated.

According to the Sixth Five-Year National Development Plan (2016-2021), Iranian universities are projected to attract about 75,000 foreign students, IRNA reported on Saturday.

The universities have the capacity to admit up to 90,000 foreign students, however, it requires the creation of appropriate educational infrastructure, the expansion of diplomacy, appropriate publicity, and so on, Rahimi explained.

Currently, foreign nationals constitute 1.64 percent of the country's student population.

According to the 20-Year National Vision Document (ending 2025), foreign students should account for 1.8 percent of the whole student population, which is likely to even reach 2 percent, Afshin Akhoundzadeh, an official at the Organization of Student Affairs, said.

"Some 57,675 foreign nationals from 133 countries are studying in Iranian universities, 30,600 of whom are studying in universities affiliated with the Ministry of Science, while 25,000 others are receiving education in Azad University, and about 2,000 in medical universities."

Fifty-seven percent of the international students are studying for a master's degree, 27 percent for a bachelor's degree and 15 percent are educating to receive a Ph.D., while the remaining one percent study at other levels.

Law, Persian literature, and computer engineering are the top three fields of study for foreign students in Iran, while civil engineering, business management, political science, English language and literature, Quran and hadith sciences, international relations, and electrical engineering, and other majors with the highest number of non-Iranian students.

In 2013, 35 centers were allowed to admit foreign students, which has increased to 77 in 2021.

## Iranian universities shine at global rankings 2021

Most recently, thirty-six Iranian universities have been listed among more than 1,000 major universities worldwide, according to the Center for Science and Technology Studies Leiden Ranking for 2021.

The 2021 Times Higher Education Impact Rankings has listed 27 Iranian universities among the 1,115 most effective institutions worldwide.

Six Iranian universities have been placed among the world's top universities announced by the prestigious Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings 2021.

Times Higher Education also has published its annual ranking of the world's top universities for 2021, listing 47 Iranian universities, which shows an increase of 7 universities compared to the last year.

With 47 Iranian universities ranked among 1,527 top universities of 93 countries in the world in 2021 rankings, Iran achieved a great improvement in the academic field.

Some 21 Islamic countries were also listed in the ranking. However, Iran holds the highest share with 47 universities.

With a scientific growth rate of 10.4 percent in 2019, Iran ranked second among the top 25 countries in the world, next to China with a growth rate of 12.9 percent, according to the Web of Science website.

According to statistics released by the International Web of Science Database, Iran's citation rank has always been on the rise over the last eight years, from 24 in 2012 to 16 in 2019.

## Charity supports refugee children suffering from cancer

→ **1** Currently, children with cancer and their families in all public and university hospitals with pediatric hematology and oncology wards in 18 cities of Iran receive support services, he noted.

According to World Health Organization (WHO), Acute Lymphocytic Leukemia (ALL) which is also known as blood cancer is one of the most common cancers in children and if diagnosed early, its cure rate will increase significantly. The registered cases at MAHAK also indicate that blood cancer variation is the most frequent cancer among refugee children, as well.

The children and their families who have to travel far from their residences in order to receive proper treatment also receive full MAHAK coverage for travel and accommodation services similar to Iranian nationals.

Based on a memorandum of understanding signed in 2001, a part of treatment and support services expenses are covered by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR).



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GUIDE TO  
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

A fool's mind is at the mercy of his tongue and a wise  
man's tongue is under the control of his mind.

Imam Ali (AS)

## Chinese-Iranian relations: Mutual influences in painting

### Part 1

In the Chinese cultural sphere, Persian artistic influence was at its peak under the Tang dynasty (618-906 CE), contemporary with the end of the Sassanid period (651) and the first centuries after the Islamic conquest.

The reciprocal influence of Chinese art in Persia was apparent in contemporary ceramics and other small arts but cannot be observed in painting before the Ilkhanid period (1256-1336).

These mutual influences were transmitted through a variety of media, and, as always when artists of one culture are exposed to works from another, only those aspects that were particularly compatible with local tastes were emulated and adapted.

### Sassanid and early Islamic periods

The 6th- and 7th-century (Sui dynasty, 581-618) frescos in the Buddhist caves at Dunhuang include pearl-bordered roundels containing horsemen hunting lionesses, probably derived from Sasanian models, as well as a number of motifs associated with the Sogdian art of Pyandzhikent.

Sasanian Persian art also strongly influenced Tang metalwork and wall paintings, for example, those found in the tombs of the Tang princes Yide (Li Zhong-run, 682-701) and Zhang-huai (Li Xian, 654-84) in Gan xian, Shensi province, where images like one of a woman under a tree were clearly derived from motifs on Sasanian silver vessels.

Even the Tang painter Wu Daoxuan was said to have been influenced by Central Asian cave paintings. On the other hand, except for a few surviving illustrated Manichean manuscripts found in Central Asia, there is little evidence of Chinese influence on painting from the Iranian world.

A travel account of the mid-Tang period (ca. late 8th century), Jing Xing Ji by Du Huan, mentions a Chinese captive from the "Battle of Talas"; he spent several years in the Abbasid capital, probably Kufa (Pelliot).

Two Chinese painters, as well as Chinese weavers and potters, are also mentioned, but there are no surviving signed works of such Chinese artists, nor is there any visible trace of Chinese influence on the style of Islamic painting and metalwork from this period, though it was very strong on contemporary Islamic ceramics.

### Ilkhanid period

Although artists under the Seljuks could have adopted certain East Asian elements from northern China in the Liao (907-1125) and Jin (1115-1234) periods, the rarity of extant contemporary Persian paintings prevents their being identified.

Eastern influence on Persian painting first becomes noticeable in manuscripts illustrated during the reign of the Ilkhanids, when the center of artistic and cultural activity was their capital, Tabriz, which was in direct contact with China via the trade routes through Central Asia.

Most Persian paintings in "Chinese style" are assumed to have been produced there. The Chinese impact on various aspects of Persian painting is particularly evident in such court manuscripts as the Manafe al-Hayawan by Ibn Bokhtishu copied at Maragheh in 1297 or 1299 and now in the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York; two fragments of Rashid al-Din's Jame al-Tawarikh in the library of the University of Edinburgh and a private collection in Switzerland; and the dispersed fragment of a manuscript of Ferdowsi's Shahnameh formerly owned by the dealer Benjamin Demotte and known as the great Mongol Shahnameh.

An important way in which Chinese influence on the painting of this period manifested itself was in the use of a softer, more delicate and sinuous line and shading, in contrast to the boldly outlined areas of flat color that characterized Persian painting.

Lighter, more subdued coloring also clearly reflected the impact of Chinese taste, approximating the monochromatic tonality of ink painting.

The scant available evidence suggests that Persian painters had traditionally preferred to crowd the picture space with a large number of motifs concentrated in the frontal plane, but in this period they learned from the Chinese to place their figures more effectively in space.

The devices of superimposing several planes and arranging figures and motifs in overlapping rows on the manuscript page may have been adapted from Chinese conventions for producing a sense of depth. The use of a bird's-eye view may also have been an adaptation of the basic perspective of Chinese painting.

Although Persian manuscripts of this period include many vertical compositions, the horizontal format of Chinese hand scrolls was also adopted; figures were arranged horizontally and in lateral motion, often breaking through the frame and thus suggesting an extension of the picture space.

The opposite device of allowing the frame to cut off parts of figures and motifs had long been known in China, particularly in bird-and-flower paintings; it, too, was adopted in Persia.

The style of figure drawing was also influenced by Chinese taste. The use of line and shading to suggest volume and the placement of figures in the picture space to suggest interaction were all devices known to Tang painters and were revived in the Yuan period, when they had an impact on the painting of the Timurids, particularly those preserved in albums in Istanbul and elsewhere.

Source: Encyclopedia Iranica

To be continued

# IRIB brings Chinese “Imperial Doctress” to Iranian homes

**A R T** **TEHRAN** — Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) has purchased the rights for the Iranian broadcast of the Chinese 2016 TV series, “The Imperial Doctress”.

The first part of the 50-episode series directed by Lee Kwok Lap was broadcast from IRIB's Channel 5 on Saturday.

Starring Cecilia Liu, Zhang Zimu, Wallace Huo, Lou Yunhao, Huang Xuan and Wu Ze Jin Xi, the historical drama is based on the story of Tan Yunxian, a female physician during the Ming dynasty in China during the rule of Emperor Yingzong.

Tan Yunxian came from a long line of medical practitioners, her family having served as court physicians for several generations.

However, the practice for female physicians came to a halt when many were framed for abusing the form.

Still Yunxian was determined to learn medicine so she did so in secrecy. With her enthusiasm and persistence, Yunxian overcame many difficulties and rose through the ranks to become the most famous female doctor of the Ming Dynasty.

Along the way, she met and fell in love with Zhu Qizhen and Zhu Qiyu, two royal siblings with opposite personalities who entered into a rivalry for the throne.



A poster for the Chinese TV series “The Imperial Doctress”.

The series aired every day on Jiangsu TV and Dragon TV, from 13 February to 9 March 2016.

The titular character in the drama series, Tan Yunxian, is a real-life historical figure

who came from a renowned medical family.

She was one of the few female doctors that were known to exist in history. Before her death, she published a book titled “Sayings of a Female Doctor”, which was passed down

through the generations.

However, the romance depicted in the drama between Tan Yunxian and the two Emperors is strictly fictional.

In reality, Tan Yunxian did not exist in the same time period as Zhu Qizhen and Zhu Qiyu, and naturally would not have been able to work at the Zhengtong Emperor's Palace.

The character in the story is actually a combination of Tan Yunxian and the historical Empress Hang.

During the writing of the drama, screenwriter Zhang Wei consulted professional Chinese physicians regarding medical terminology and prescription use.

Lead actress Cecilia Liu reportedly took lessons with a traditional physician to learn the basics of Chinese medicine and treatment such as acupuncture, taking pulse and massage techniques in preparation for the role.

The series received positive feedback from the audience and topped Baidu's charts of the most popular TV dramas in China.

It gained attention for its exquisite costumes, a showcase of traditional Chinese medicine and the performances of its leads. The series was also noted for featuring a well-respected female figure in China history.

## Iranian director Ali Shams to stage Shahnameh story in Rome

organized by the Rome Philharmonic (sic) for the official reopening of theaters on June 30 as the Italian government has eased curbs on regular activities following vaccinating people against COVID-19.

He also said that several Italian directors have also been called on to stage performances at the same time.

“Esfandiar's Eyes” is about the battle between Rustam and Esfandiar, two main characters in Persian poet Ferdowsi's Shahnameh, during which Rustam learns from Simurgh that the only weapon that can affect Esfandiar is a shot to the eyes from a special double-headed arrow made from the branch of a tamarisk tree near the Persian Gulf.

“I have always been interested in ancient legends, therefore I chose a story from the Shahnameh, which will be performed by an Italian actor,” Shams said.

“Since I have had enough time to work on the script, I will focus on the forms and similarities to communicate

with the Italian audience, he added.

He also said that he has asked the Rome Philharmonic to let him stage the play in its courtyard, which enjoys ancient Roman structures and graves helping the audience connect with the performance.

In 2018, Shams's troupe organized a tour of Europe to perform a play on migration titled “The Mediterranean” in response to the ruthless fascist environment created against the refugees in Europe.

The tour began in Italy on October 15, and the troupe performed in Pescara and Rome.

“As right-wing governments have come to power in Europe and due to a rise in migration numbers from the Middle East and Africa, refugees coming from these regions have become a major concern for Europeans,” Shams said at that time.

The play was in English and the tour continued in Hungary, Sweden and Germany.



This file photo shows Iranian director Ali Shams in Rome.

**A R T** **TEHRAN** — Iranian director Ali Shams has announced his plan to stage a story from the Persian epic masterpiece Shahnameh in Rome.

Speaking to the Persian service of MNA on Saturday, he said that he has been invited by the Rome Philharmonic to direct “Esfandiar's Eyes” during a program, which will be

## Book on German literati inspired by Hafez poetry published

**CULTURE** **TEHRAN** — Berlin-based Iranian scholar Nasser Kanani's book scrutinizing the German literati influenced by Persian poet Hafez has been published in Germany.

The book entitled “Hafez Love Poems in the Mirror of German Poetry” (“Hafis' Liebeslyrik im Spiegel der Deutschen Dichtung”) has been released by Konigshausen & Neumann in Wurzburg.

“Hafez is the most famous and popular poet of the Persian tongue,” the publisher wrote in an introduction to the book.

“With his poetry, he has inspired generations of Iranian poets. However, his perfectly formed

poetry has proven to be inimitable, and the sheen that emanates from his name has dwarfed all generations of poets in Iran.

“Hafez is also more popular than any other oriental poet in the German-speaking world. So far, his poems have been completely or partially translated into German more than 30 times.

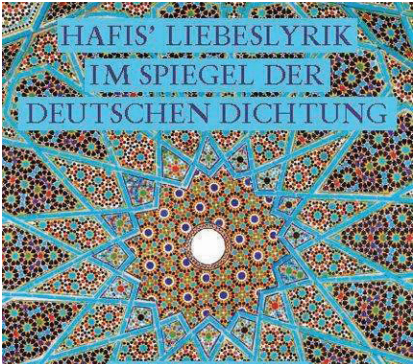
“Many famous but also less famous poets have been inspired by his love poetry.”

This book tells of 126 German-speaking poets from the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries, who have been influenced by Hafiz. Richard Wagner wrote about him, “Hafez is the greatest poet who ever lived and wrote; he

is the greatest and most exalted philosopher.”

Professor Kanani completed his studies in factory science and received his doctorate in the field of solid-state physics at the Technical University of Berlin. In 1979, he received the Venia Legendi for the field of electrochemistry. He was visiting professor at MIT and at the University of Florida in the USA as well as at Sakarya University in Turkey. He is the author of “Electroplating”, which was published in 2005.

Kanani has also published several books on various aspects of Persian culture, including “Hafez and His Divan”, which was published in 2016.



Front cover of Berlin-based Iranian scholar Nasser Kanani's book's “Hafis' Liebeslyrik im Spiegel der Deutschen Dichtung”.

## “Solar Eclipse” seen at Italy’s Figari Film Fest

**A R T** **TEHRAN** — “Solar Eclipse” by Iranian directors Raha Amirfazli and Alireza Qasemi is competing in the Figari Film Fest underway in Olbia, a coastal city in northeast Sardinia, Italy.

Starring Faraz Modiri, Payman Naeimi, Anita Bagheri, Paniz Esmaeili and Khorshid Cheraghijur, the film is about Saghi and her two friends, who have come to the largest park in Tehran to take pictures of the one-in-a-century total eclipse announced later in the afternoon.

Mischiefous and rebellious, they steal a camera stand, lie to their parents and discuss boys as well as an upcoming party. Their wanderings lead them to a remote part of the park. As the sun disappears, Saghi sees something that should have stayed hidden.



“Solar Eclipse” by Iranian directors Raha Amirfazli and Alireza Qasemi.

Co-organized by Diero Film Production and the Olbia Film Network every year, the Figari Film Fest is dedicated to short cinema by young and independent filmmakers.

Fifteen movies are competing in the international section of the festival, which opened on Saturday and will run until June 24.

## “I Won’t Remain Alone” at Parnu film festival

**A R T** **TEHRAN** — Iranian short documentary “I Won't Remain Alone” directed by Yaser Talebi will be competing in the Parnu International Documentary and Science Film Festival in Estonia.

The documentary follows Sorayya and Seyed Jalal, a poor, elderly couple residing in a remote village in Northern Iran. Filmed over the course of 5 years, the film paints pictures of forgiveness, love, humanity and immortality.

It has received a nomination in the best short doc category of the festival, which will take place in the southwestern Estonian resort city of Parnu from July 12 to 25.

In addition, “The Fabric”, a co-production between Iran and Germany by Iman Behruzi has been nominated for the award for best student doc.



“I Won't Remain Alone” by Iranian director Yaser Talebi.

The Parnu festival founded in 1987 is the oldest film festival in Estonia.

The aim of the festival, in general, is to support the cultural survival of peoples. Only documentary films featuring human activities in social, historical or ecological context are accepted for competition screenings.

## Donald E. Westlake’s “God Save the Mark” published in Persian

**CULTURE** **TEHRAN** — A Persian translation of American writer Donald E. Westlake's book “God Save the Mark” has been released by Amut in Tehran.

Kayhan Bahmani is the translator of the book, which was originally published in 1967.

An Edgar Award winner, this comic novel of suspense is about a man born to be conned, who inherits a small fortune... and who becomes someone's target for murder.

Westlake (1933-2008) was one of the most prolific and talented authors of American crime fiction.

He began his career in the late 1950's, churning out novels for pulp houses — often writing as many as four novels a year under various pseudonyms such as Richard Stark — but soon began publishing under his own name.



Front cover of the Persian translation of Donald E. Westlake's book “God Save the Mark”.

His most well-known characters were John Dortmunder, an unlucky thief, and a ruthless criminal named Parker.

His writing earned him three Edgar Awards: the 1968 Best Novel award for “God Save the Mark”; the 1990 Best Short Story award for “Too Many Crooks”; and the 1991 Best Motion Picture Screenplay award for “The Grifters”.

In addition, Westlake also earned a Grand Master Award from the Mystery Writers of America in 1993.

Westlake's cinematic prose and brisk dialogue made his novels attractive to Hollywood, and several motion pictures were made from his books, with stars such as Lee Marvin and Mel Gibson.

Westlake wrote several screenplays himself, receiving an Academy Award nomination for his adaptation of “The Grifters”, Jim Thompson's noir classic.